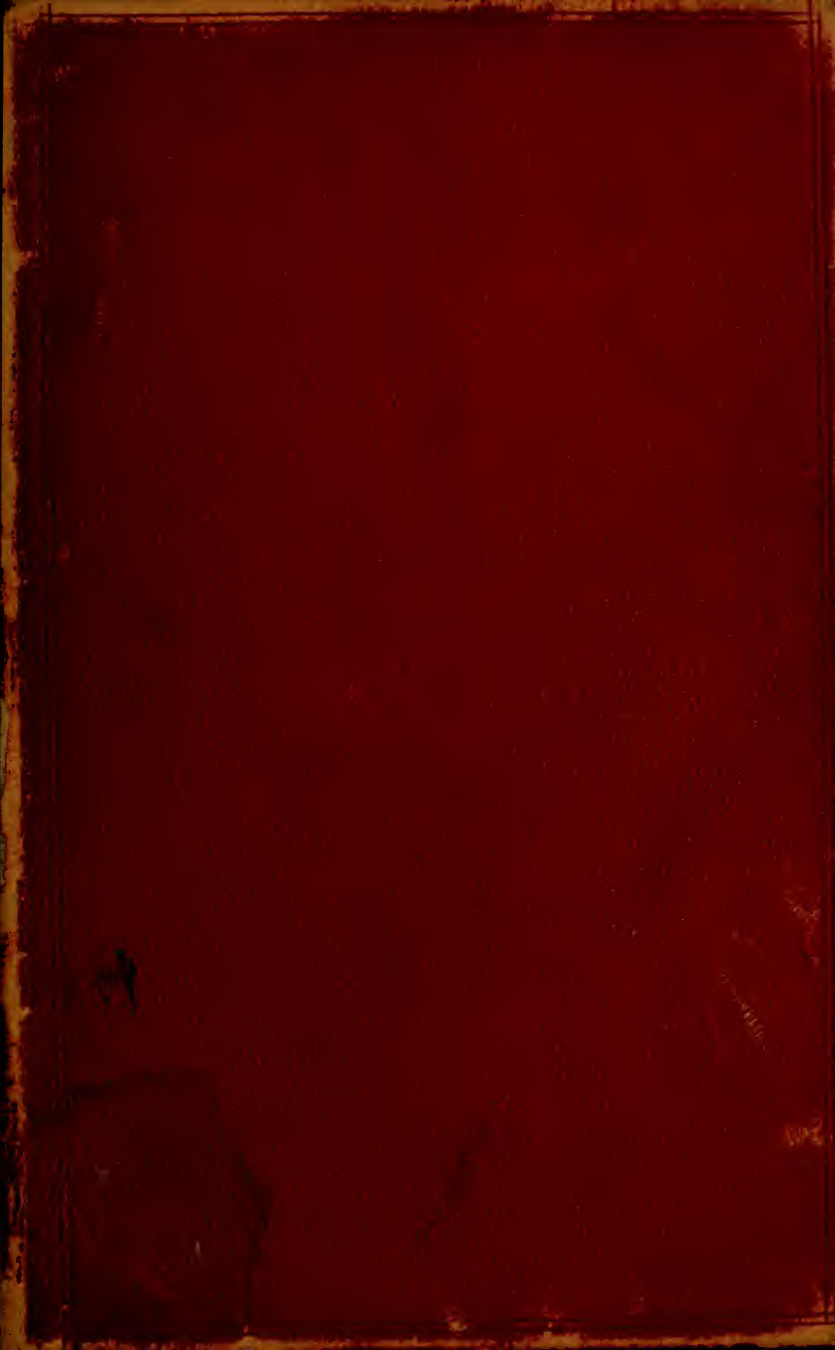


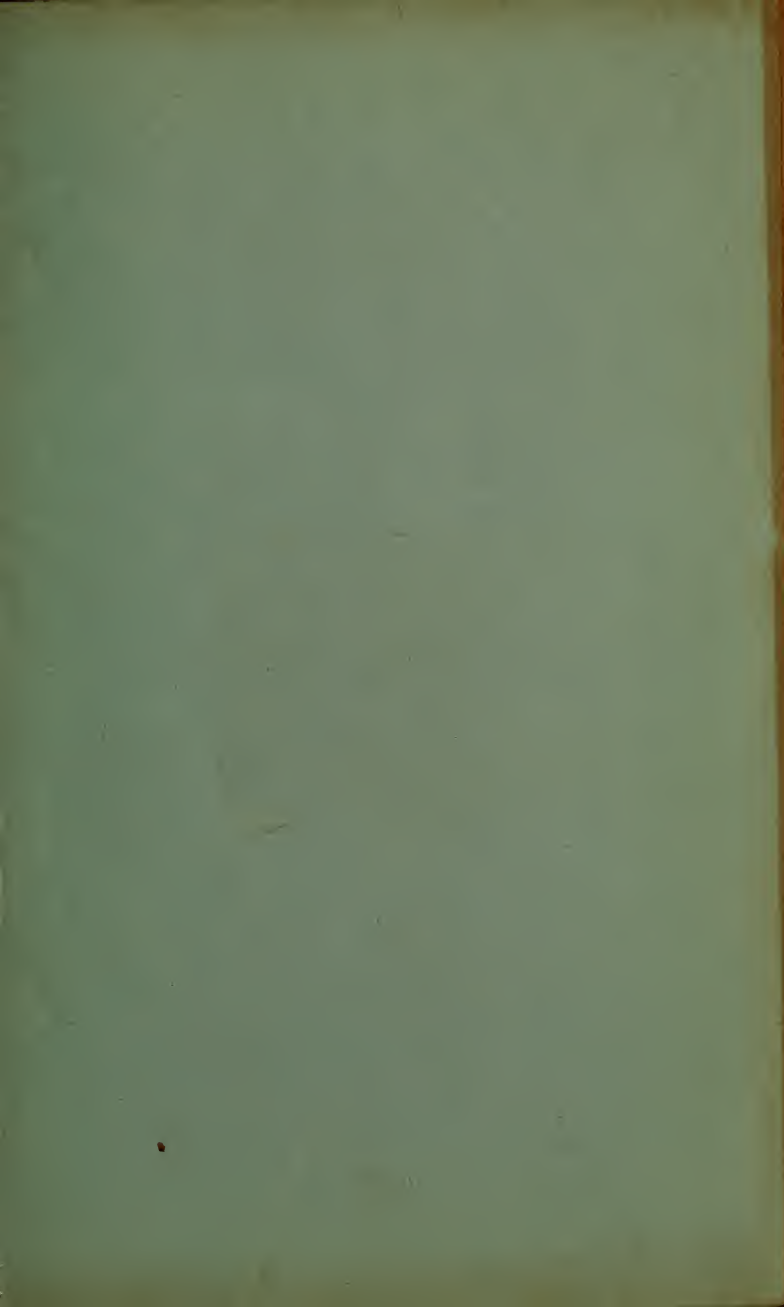


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A

CHRISTIAN MERCHANT.

A MEMOIR

OF

JAMES C. CRANE.

BY

J. L. BURROWS, D. D.,

PASTOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, RICHMOND, VA.



CHARLESTON, S. C.:

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THIS memoir has been written not as a mere grateful eulogy of a departed friend, but with a sincere desire of doing good to the living. It is intended to furnish another illustration and example of the great principle, that men, actively engaged in necessary secular affairs, may be, while "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit serving the Lord."

To the disciples of Jesus who "seek *first* the kingdom of God," and especially to merchants and active business men, this biographical sketch of one who adorned and dignified an industrial vocation, by prosecuting it in subservience to the glory of God, is affectionately dedicated, by

THE WRITER.

RICHMOND, April 1, 1858.

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MEMOIR OF JAMES C. CRANE.

HIS ANCESTORS AND BIRTH.

AMONG the original settlers of the city of Newark, N. J., in the year 1666, were Jasper Crane and Benjamin Baldwin. They transmitted to their descendants honorable and unblemished names. They were the lineal progenitors of James C. Crane.

His father, in early manhood, enlisted in the army of the Revolution, and at the very outset of the war lost all his possessions. The energy and industry that might have gathered wealth about the nucleus of the paternal inheritance, were devoted to the maintenance of the liberties of his country. Descent from a soldier of the Revolution, made poor and kept poor by his patriotism, is surely more honorable in this land, than descent from the noble and the rich.

James, the youngest of nine children, was born in Newark, on the 7th of September, 1803. While he was still young, his father died. His widowed mother—a godly woman, a constituent member of the First Baptist Church in Newark, organized in 1802—watched over his childhood with pious

and prayerful solicitude. The impressions enstamped upon his forming mind by her counsels and prayers were never erased, and he loved to tell how much he owed to the moulding influence of a mother's piety. To minister to her comfort, even while still a lad, at whatever sacrifice to himself, was a pleasure; and to provide for her wants during her declining years, and up to the time of her death, in 1829, was the grateful duty of his early manhood.

His eldest sister, too—a sincere and intelligent Christian, the wife of Mr. Josiah Johnson, a farmer in the vicinity of Newark—long exercised a most salutary influence over him.

The following extracts from a letter written to the son of this beloved sister, upon receiving the intelligence of her death, in August 1840, expresses the obligations he felt for her early counsels, as well as the earnest piety of his own spirit.

“There is no earthly relative left, toward whom I felt as towards her; none to whom I felt under such obligations as to her. I have frequently said—and felt it sincerely—that she had been a mother to me when I was helpless; and while memory lives in my bosom, I cannot fail to revere her memory, and cherish a strong regard for her many virtues. I know, too, that our love was reciprocal. I lived so long in the family that I seemed like one of her own children. But so it is; our strongest attachments in this world must be sep-

arated from their dearest objects. The chords of affection, that entwine our hearts most closely, must be sundered.

It becomes us to listen to the admonition which this dispensation speaks — ‘Be ye also ready’ — May our Heavenly Father sanctify this to our spiritual good.”

The house of this sister was his home, during the period of his boyhood, and the labors of the farm occupied his early years. The sentiments which she sought to incorporate with his earliest associations, and to which he often gratefully referred in subsequent life, were such as these: “Learn to be independent;” “Never lean on anybody;” “Command the respect of others, by deserving it;” “Never fail to fulfil an obligation;” “Disdain all subterfuges;” “Adhere conscientiously to truth and right;” “Above all, make the Bible your constant study and guide.”

Apothegms like these were illustrated in the whole course of his life, demonstrating the value of such early lessons and influences. Acting from such principles, he became the leader of the school, both in sports and in studies, in his youth, and a self-reliant, prompt and upright man in later years. His matured judgment approved his sister’s lessons, and he always spoke of her with profound respect and ardent affection. The spirit of cheerful and industrious independence, thus early inculcated, he always cherished. While grateful for

favours shown, not even his dearest friends would he permit to confer an obligation without improving the earliest opportunity to repay it in some ample equivalent, often with compound interest.

In the fourteenth year of his age he made the solemn decision which gave character to his whole subsequent life, for time, and, as we believe, for eternity. Instructed in the truths of God's word, and yielding to the drawing influences of the Holy Spirit, he consecrated himself, soul and body, to the service of his Redeemer. We know not that there was anything peculiar in his early spiritual experience. He knew that he was a sinner in the sight of God; he came to feel and mourn over it, and in penitence and self-abhorrence, to desire deliverance from the condemnation and guilt of sin. He had been taught the way of salvation through the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ. He implicitly believed these teachings, and in confiding faith committed his soul to his Redeemer, and devoted heart and life, to a loving obedience of his commands. Forty years of steadfast piety attested the genuineness and thoroughness of this early conversion. He soon made a public profession of his faith in Christ, and allegiance to Him, and in March, 1817, was baptized by Rev. David Jones, and admitted to the fellowship of the First Baptist Church in Newark.

We find the following allusions to this period of his conversion in a letter written to his sister in November, 1820,—when in the seventeenth

year of his age, and soon after his arrival in Richmond:—

“I am glad to hear that you have full meetings in Newark, sometimes. In the prayer meetings in this place you will seldom see more than ten or twelve, and sometimes not more than half that number. But we hope we realize the promise of the Lord; ‘where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst.’ We feel as though the Lord was with us indeed, and as though these little meetings were the very gate of heaven to our souls. Some Christians do not hold to prayer meetings, but they seem strange christians to me. If ever I was called from nature’s darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel, if ever I was awakened to a sense of my lost state as a sinner; if ever I felt the necessity for a Saviour to screen me from the just vengeance of God due me as a transgressor of His holy law, and if ever the blood of that Saviour who hung on Calvary and bled for the sins of His people was applied as balm to my wounded soul, these feelings first originated in a prayer meeting, where a small number of God’s people met together to pray for the prosperity Zion.”

REMOVAL TO RICHMOND, VA.

His eldest brother, Mr. William Crane, some thirteen years his senior, settled in Richmond, Va.,

in 1812, and commenced business as a dealer in leather. In 1819 he invited his brother James to a clerkship in his store, who, in November of that year, removed to Richmond.

Behold a lad, sixteen years of age, with a simple common school education, far from the home of his childhood, severed from the restraining, pious influences that had so sedulously watched and guided his steps, with buoyant impulses and ardent affections, exposed to the temptations of city life, new and ever attractive to the youthful heart, and shall we not tremble for his steadfastness and integrity? In all our commercial cities, thousands have been wrecked amid such snares, and have been sadly laid in an early grave, or have dragged themselves through a subsequent life of debasement, poverty, and often, of crime.

UNION WITH THE CHURCH IN RICHMOND.

James C. Crane wisely, voluntarily fettered his own feet that they should not run in the alluring paths of folly, dissipation and vice, and yielded his heart to the counter attractions of piety and benevolence. He promptly secured a letter of dismissal from the church in Newark, and united with the band of Christians who had just organized the Second Baptist Church in Richmond, of which Rev. David Roper, and subsequently, Rev. James B. Taylor, was pastor. We need scarcely say that such a step afforded the surest safeguard

against temptation, and gave the most auspicious promise of a life of integrity and usefulness. It is sadly true that even this sometimes fails to ensure a manhood of respectability and virtue, for the strongest ties that bind the depravity of humanity may be broken; but infidelity itself must be conscious that if the restraints which christian associations impose upon man's evil propensities,—if the motives to purity which the pulpit and the church furnish,—are not sufficient to arrest evil predispositions and confirm virtuous principles, then in this world of ours there is nothing that can promise such results. When these prove inefficient, human wisdom has nothing to recommend in substitution of them.

We perceive, then, in the youthful conversion of James C. Crane, and in his early and steadfast union with the church of Christ, the influences that gave character to his life, and made him an honored, happy and beneficent man.

INTEREST IN THE CHURCH.

We find James C. Crane, at once, though but a lad, manifesting an ardent interest in the prosperity of the church, practically working, and out of his poverty giving, to further its interests. His own artless letters written to his friends at home reveal his spirit.

In October 1822, he writes thus to his brother Moses:—

* * * * * "The Second Baptist Church—to which all our family belong—have been building a new meeting-house, and we expect it will be opened next Saturday and Sunday. It will cost about \$5000 or \$6000, I expect, before it is done. There are but twenty-six members of the church, and but ten or twelve male members, and *we have had to pay our money pretty smartly, but what we have is not our own, and we ought to recollect that we are but stewards, and are to give an account of our stewardship at the last great day.*"

* * * * * "We are too cold and dull with respect to religion here. Wickedness abounds in this city. Oh, what reason have the people of God to cry mightly to Him, who has promised that He will hear and answer prayer, and that if we ask, we shall receive! If we could only rely upon His promises and approach a throne of grace with holy boldness, and with that faith that works by love, we certainly should receive answers to our prayers and experience a time of refreshing from the presence of Him who filleth all in all."

*November 3, 1822:—*Our Meeting House was opened on Saturday, Oct. 26,—Rev. Robert B. Semple—called the best Baptist preacher in Virginia—preached the first sermon. We had quite a good congregation, and a very good sermon. The House is built of brick, fifty feet by sixty, on the plan of the meeting-house in Newark. We have paid between \$2000 and \$3000."

The spirit thus exhibited by the lad of nineteen years, almost without youthful associates, in the membership of the church, standing almost alone among the companions of his youth, regularly at the prayer meetings, liberal with his scanty earnings, yearning for the spiritual efficiency of the church, furnishes a graceful example to young Christians, and touches the key note to the harmony of his useful life.

THOUGHTS ON COMING OF AGE.

Some two months before he reached that critical period in the life of a young man, his twenty-first birth-day, he thus writes to his sister:—

“You know that I am about to be thrown entirely upon my own exertions for support. The most important part of my life is just before me, and for several months past, whenever I had any leisure from business, this has filled my thoughts. I expect to continue with brother William a while, at any rate. Without any certain prospect before me, how I shall get through this world, is calculated to render me unhappy. I am satisfied that I shall get along in some way or other, and I regret that my heart is so wicked as not to trust more entirely to God for direction and support under all the circumstances through which I am to pass. Oh, how apt we are to distrust God, to depend upon ourselves, which insures our failure! But

although we must depend upon God, yet it is our duty to use exertions, and we cannot expect success without the use of the means.

HIS BUSINESS RELATIONS.

From his settlement in Richmond, in 1819, until 1842, Mr. J. C. Crane, was associated in business with his brother, first as clerk and afterwards as partner. For several years two large business houses were sustained, one in Richmond, the other in Baltimore. The latter was conducted under the personal superintendence of William Crane, while James remained in the management of the former. In 1839 he removed to Baltimore, with the purpose of concentrating the entire business in that city. But the commercial embarrassments that soon after distressed the country, rendered the continuance of the long established house in Richmond necessary, and after an absence of some two years he returned to that city. With the exception of this interval, and some months in 1853-4, when his health had begun to decline, his settled residence was in Richmond.

In 1842 the partnership was dissolved, each brother purchasing the interest of the other in the city where he resided. We have thus grouped these prominent facts in his life, that we may the better maintain unity and consecutiveness in the following pages.

Some of the reasons for his temporary removal

from Richmond, are given in the following extracts from a letter to his pastor, Rev. James B. Taylor. They are characteristic of the man, and illustrative of his uniform conscientious piety, and cannot be read by any Christian without profit.

“As it respects my removal from the city, my mind is fully made up, provided I can arrange my worldly business. About this I shall make some certain arrangements in Baltimore the last of this week, if the Lord will. My business lately has so occupied my mind and body, that I find no time for friendly conversation, or even reflection. I feel the want of advice and counsel, and not unfrequently of comfort,—of something to soothe my troubled spirit. I know by experience that religious enjoyment *only* will satisfy an immortal mind, and while my business has in some measure deprived me of the privileges to which I have been accustomed, I have found leanness in my soul. It has become necessary to relieve myself of some of the burdens which press me down, and one object I have in removing is to place myself where my temporal affairs need not so closely occupy me, and leave me more time for spiritual enjoyment, and for active religious labor. My mind has been for some years uneasy, because I could not feel that I was properly employed, while so large a portion of my time and energy were devoted to the world. I feel conscious that I can locate myself where, although I may not

make as much money, I can be more useful. I am too worldly minded here, and I know not how to be less so, while I am compelled to attend to so large a worldly business."

Subsequent circumstances prevented his permanent settlement in Baltimore, and he soon returned to Richmond.

BUSINESS HABITS.

Mr. Crane prosecuted his secular business industriously, energetically and successfully. No mere worldly merchant whose whole faculties and time were devoted to gain, was earlier at the counting room than he, nor when there, more attentive, watchful and earnest in the conduct of traffic. No details of his business were overlooked or neglected. His books were never confused, nor his wares from under his control. In all his management he was shrewd, active and prompt. For readiness of perception, soundness of judgment, eagerness of enterprise, sagacity of foresight, he was acknowledged to be in the very first rank of business men. "Whatsoever his hand found to do, he did with his might." A superficial observer, noticing him only in his business operations, might conclude, that his entire thought and affections were concentrated in these, and that his supreme purpose and aim in life, was to enlarge trade and accumulate wealth. He was thoroughly active and absorbed in whatever claimed

his attention. His whole mercantile conduct illustrated the proverb, "Drive thy business, and let not thy business drive thee."

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

And yet, notwithstanding this earnest attention to his own affairs, he had time and heart for any public interests which claimed his attention. Such business qualifications, adorning a character of conscientious integrity, procured him numerous appointments to trusteeships and executorships, to the boards of directory of Insurance, and Banking Companies, internal improvement organizations, etc. He fulfilled actively the duties of every post he accepted, and his readiness of speech, promptness of counsel, and assiduity in labor, generally brought one of the laboring oars into his own hand. In every association of which he was a member—municipal, mercantile or religious—he was very likely to be assigned the position which required the most work or the highest responsibility. And such duties were punctually fulfilled with surprising readiness and ease. In the exercise of a sound common sense,—more frequently praised than possessed,—he seemed intuitively to take of every subject presented for his consideration, a strong clear, practical view, and that view he expressed in few direct words. None were at a loss to discover what he meant, or how he felt, on any theme of which he thought. His judgments were not

infallible, of course, for he was an imperfect man; but upon matters that came within the sphere of his knowledge, there were few wiser counsellors.

For several years he was chief engineer of the fire department of the city; and no man could display more energy and efficiency in such a position. Always among the first at a conflagration, by day or night, his quick eye would at once perceive what was best to be done; and his clear, ringing voice, heard above the clamor, gave direction to all the movements of the hour. His activity upon such occasions seemed so like ubiquity, as to become the frequent theme of admiration and wonder.

We have endeavored to avoid anything like exaggeration in these representations of the uniform energy and industry of Mr. Crane, during the healthful years of his manhood. Those who knew him best do not deem the picture overdrawn.

ENERGY SUBSERVIENT TO PIETY.

Into all these activities of an earnest and stirring daily life, Mr. Crane practically and prominently carried his religious principles. He seemed as truly a christian man in the store, on the street, and in the business board, as in the church. He did not lay aside his piety as do men their holiday garments, when he went forth to his daily toil, but he maintained its spirit and illustrated its principles in all the avocations of the busy world.

Those who dealt with him, felt that they could rely implicitly upon his word. "His word was accounted as his bond, and his bond as the bill of a specie paying bank."* The community that had the fullest opportunities to know his character, most cordially endorse the sentiment that if James C. Crane ever deceived any one, in any business transaction, little or large, it was only because he was himself deceived.

DIRECT CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

Nor did his piety consist alone in passive integrity. He was not a man to be satisfied with merely not doing wrong. He sought to do good by a positive influence and by direct personal efforts. His grieved look of reproof, or gentle word of warning, was often a rebuke of profanity and ribaldry. Many a man owes to his memory a debt of gratitude for the earnest counsels that sought to restrain the wanderings of his youth. Not a few are worthy and useful members of the church, whom he first invited to the Sabbath School and the sanctuary. Many a young man, coming a stranger to the city to engage in business, was told beforehand, that upon his first introduction to Mr. Crane he would be invited to the Sunday school and the church. And the prediction was uniformly fulfilled. He was a judicious and liberal benefactor of the poor, not bestowing

* Dr. Jeter.

his alms indiscriminately upon passing beggars, but enquiring into their circumstances and directing them if possible to methods of helping themselves. He was often found in the chamber of sickness, and left behind him, to comfort the sufferer, the sweet odor of his sympathies, his prayers and his alms where they were needed. The erring or negligent disciple he sought, and labored to restrain and restore. He had a peculiarly happy faculty of introducing pious themes, into ordinary conversation; not repulsively, or abruptly, but naturally and gratefully, as though "the mouth spake out of the abundance of the heart." There was nothing gloomy or restrained in his manner of conversing upon such topics. On the contrary, he was always remarkably sprightly and cheerful, throwing out his thoughts vivaciously and warmly, so that none doubted his sincerity and earnestness. With such spirit and manner, he was a most agreeable companion, genial and courteous, universally winning respect and affection. The young men of the community, especially regarded him with confidence and esteem. Not a few attribute to his counsels and generous aid, their success and prosperity in business.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.

Amid all the whirl and pressure of secular cares, no man of entire leisure was more punctual and attentive in all religious observances and duties. From the meetings of the church, whether for public wor-

ship, pious conference and prayer, or for business, it may almost literally be said, he was never absent. Rev. J. B. Taylor, for many years his pastor and friend, says of him: "As a hearer of the word he was never listless. He always seemed interested and frequently indicated deep emotion. It was his habit to treasure up the leading thoughts of the discourse, and to make them the subject of profitable conversation with his family and friends." He deemed no hurry of business an excuse for absence from the place of prayer. To be there he considered a paramount duty, and found it his brightest enjoyment. No cloud nor shower, no cold nor heat, no Banking or Insurance Board, much less a place of amusement, detained him from the house of God. He was as confidently expected to be present whenever the doors of the sanctuary were open, for church service of any sort, as the minister or the sexton. He was accustomed to say that any man might so arrange his business if he had the heart for it, as to be uniformly in the house of God, and that his prosperity and efficiency would be promoted rather than injured by such a course. His life was thus an illustration of entire consecration to God, amid the most active worldly pursuits. It was a practical commentary read of all men, upon the divine injunction, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." And this course he pursued, not fitfully and from impulses, but uniformly from principle, and during his whole life until

prostrated by disease. Were all the disciples of Christ characterized by such temper and devotion, the world would speedily be converted.

ACTIVE PIETY.

Nor was he in the house of God, so regularly, as a mere passive spectator, or recipient of blessings. He was there as everywhere, to do something. He did not merely attend the services; he joined in them with heart and voice. The stranger found him at the door courteously inviting him to a seat. His clear tones were always heard leading or aiding the song of praise. His "word of exhortation" in the conference, or of advice in the business meeting, was ready at the right time; was generally pertinent and sensible, and heard with respect and profit. His prayers, as he led the congregation to the throne of grace, were humble and fervent, and adapted to the circumstances of the people. And yet with all this he was never censured as a bold and forward man, pushing beyond his proper sphere. There was, particularly after he had reached mature age, a meekness and humility and appropriateness, as well as earnestness and sincerity in all that he did, that disarmed all censure of this sort, and won the confidence of citizens and the love of Christians.

VERSATILITY OF TALENT.

With a felicitous versatility of talents, he seemed intuitively to apprehend what was appropriate to

the circumstances in which he was placed. His mind and heart seemed engrossed in any object which for the time claimed his attention. While engaged in business one might judge from his earnestness and industry, that he was scarcely fitted for anything else; and yet in an hour his sprightly conversation gave tone to the social circle, or his earnest prayers and exhortations, infused new spiritual life into the devotional meeting. When he led the psalmody of the church, it seemed as though he was peculiarly fitted to be a teacher of sacred music. When he presided in the Sabbath School, one thought of the good he might effect by traversing the country as a Sunday school missionary. When he participated in the deliberations of a missionary board, or anniversary, the idea occurred to many that he was admirably qualified for the secretaryship of such a society. When he conducted the devotions of an evening meeting, and attempted to expound and enforce the lessons of the Bible, many thought that the "ministry of the word" was his manifest vocation.

The secret of this adaptability to the various places of his work, was to be found in his earnestness and consecration, rather than in any superior mental endowments or peculiarities.

THOUGHTS OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

Indeed, he was often urged by his friends to devote his life and talents to the duties of the ministry.

At one period, he seriously pondered his duty in this respect, and contemplated consecrating his powers to this holy work. From the period of his early conversion, this question had often perplexed his mind. The following letter, written to Rev. J. B. Taylor, in September, 1837, after a painful and dangerous illness, reveals the anxieties of his soul on this subject, and gives a gratifying insight into the earnest and conscientious character of the man :

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

When I was first brought, as I hope, to trust, as a poor, helpless sinner, in Jesus Christ for salvation, I felt very strongly my obligations to Him, and, to some extent, believed it to be my duty to devote myself exclusively to his service. I was so situated at that time, however, that I thought myself providentially absolved from the obligation. I was then entirely dependent on my labor for support—though but thirteen years old—and knew I always should be. I possessed no means of preparation, and though the offer was made, I was unwilling to accept as a gratuity what I was not able to obtain in any other way. I therefore gave up all idea of it, and, for many years, did not allow myself to contemplate the subject. Yet it has always been, more or less, impressed upon my mind; and when I arrived at maturity, I determined to devote the proceeds of my labor to the cause of God, if my labors could not be directly given in that way. With this I have satisfied myself for many years past, while I have, with

all the energy and industry I could command, devoted myself to my business. But I must confess to you, my dear brother, that my conscience has never been at ease, and while I have frequently argued with others that it was not my duty to engage entirely in the work of the ministry, the arguments I have urged have not satisfied my own mind, but I have rather used them as a salvo to quiet my own conscience. I have felt more deeply on this subject within a year past, since the Lord raised me from the gate of death, to which I was brought last fall. I have kept my feelings mostly within my own bosom until the conversation with you, a few days since, — except, perhaps, that my wife may have sometimes known them. I have been constrained, within a few months past, to speak sometimes, and to get in the way of doing so, against my own will, apparently. I have found rising up in my own bosom an almost uncontrollable desire to be more directly engaged in the Lord's work, and a growing indifference to my worldly business, as well as a willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of Christ. If my own heart does not deceive me, I do desire to pursue that course which will make me most useful. I often fear that I am actuated by pride or selfishness, and frequently, after speaking in public, I conclude that I have not such feelings as I ought to have, and that I will not again suffer my desires to lead me to do it; but when opportunity offers my desire overcomes my fear. My experience has taught me that I have a deceitful heart, naturally full of pride and every evil passion,

and these are so little controlled by grace, that I am frequently impelled almost to relinquish the idea of ever being useful at all. I cannot bear the thought of urging on others the importance of truths, when my own heart and life are not under their influence. I do feel, however, to some extent, that the Saviour is precious to me, because I am a justly-condemned sinner, and I wish to recommend Him to others. I feel, to some extent, at least, concerned for the condition of my fellow-men. I wish — sometimes ardently — that they may be saved. These feelings are, however, nothing in comparison with what they should be. Thus much for my feelings. In relation to some of them you are already acquainted, from our intimacy, and know them perhaps better, from your knowledge of me for ten or twelve years past, than I can now express them.

STRUGGLES.

There is, also, in my case, a powerful influence exerted on my mind by the continued expression of decided opinions, on the part of my brethren, on this subject. If this opinion were confined to a few, its influence would not be so impressive; and while I know full well that my brethren largely overrate my talents and capabilities and piety, still I cannot but feel that their opinions ought, at least, to induce me calmly and prayerfully to consider the matter.

OBSTACLES.

Another consideration is, the great scarcity of laborers and the vast field to be cultivated. Many of our churches are entirely destitute, and others nearly so, and many of our benevolent efforts languish for want of efficient and energetic efforts in their behalf. Still another, is the command of the Saviour,—which, in my view, is imperative upon all who are, in the estimation of the church, qualified to do so, to devote themselves to the work.

I know nothing of any special call to the work, except what may be found in what I have already briefly referred to. I could enlarge on these, but it is not necessary.

There are formidable objections, which have their influence on my mind.

The most prominent is my own want of personal piety and holiness. I feel that I have scarcely any of the true spirit of Christ; and I see in myself so little conformity to His image, and so little zeal, while there is so much sin attached to me, that I feel as though it would be presumptuous to attempt to instruct and exhort others. I fear that I should injure rather than benefit the cause, and that I might rather bring reproach than honor to my Saviour—and I wish to honor Him. Beside which, my want of qualifications of other kinds deters me. I have not had any education to prepare me for the work, and have no time to spend in acquiring such an education as I believe important, though not indispensable

as a qualification. My habits of thinking, too, have become so fixed, that I fear it would be impossible for me so to control my mind as to be useful. My engagements in business are such, that I know not how to break off from them, though this could be arranged by degrees, if my brother William would consent to do so.

LONGINGS FOR GREATER USEFULNESS.

The question whether I might not be more useful as I now am, is also an all-important one. And once more,—the fear that I may mistake the path of duty, and go without being sent, operates strongly on my mind; for I must again say that, if I can only determine what is duty, I am not only willing, but anxious to do it. I wish to do the most I can for Him who has done so much for me.

I have hastily penned these thoughts, in the counting-room, and subject to constant interruptions, and perhaps you may think it hardly worth while to trouble you so much; but if it affords me any satisfaction to communicate with you, I am sure you will not feel otherwise than satisfied with it.

In conclusion, permit me to say that I have several times, within a few years past, taken up this subject and thought and prayed over it for weeks together, and have brought myself to the conclusion that I was in the way of duty, and have tried to satisfy my conscience, but have never yet succeeded. And perhaps I ought to say, in candor, that I much prefer my pres-

ent sphere, if I could feel that I was in the way of duty. I do not feel that I am not in the path in which I ought to be now; but I am not satisfied, and the object of this is rather to get from you an expression of your views and feelings, to assist in settling my own mind in my present situation, or in bringing me wherever my duty calls me.

I almost tremble at the thought of taking upon myself any responsibility of this kind, and should not be willing—much less anxious—to do so, unless driven to it by the imperious calls of duty.

I desire that this may be confidential; and I also desire, my dear brother, that you would pray for me, that I may be guided aright; and if you can do so, I should be much pleased with an answer. Do, my dear brother, deal in faithfulness with me, and whatever you do write, place the objections as prominently as possible. I wish this to be considered as a letter of inquiry. I hope I am asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" Oh, that I may find an answer to this interesting query!

With strong regards, I am

Your unworthy Brother in Christ,

JAS. C. CRANE.

Rev. Jas. B. Taylor, Richmond, Va.

For some time, this great question perplexed his soul, and with the approval of the Church, he frequently addressed his fellow-men from the pulpit, in the vicinity of Richmond. But an earnest and prayerful consideration of the whole subject, induced the

conclusion that he could be more useful in the sphere he so worthily filled. And in that sphere, it was often said of him, that he probably exerted a wider and more salutary influence than any minister in the State.

HIS DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

In 1824, Mr. Crane married Miss Isabella Steel, of Philadelphia, Pa., and for thirty-two years they dwelt together, cheering and comforting each other by mutual sympathy, confidence and love. Beside a son who died in early life, a family of five sons grew up around them.

The cheerful piety and practical wisdom of Mr. Crane was nowhere more beautifully developed than in the internal management of his household. No business cares were ever permitted to induce neglect of his family. No cold indifference to the enjoyments of his children ; no petulance or moroseness in checking their childish sports, nor disregarding their little interests, ever made his home gloomy or repulsive. He exercised a controlling authority, but he exercised it kindly and lovingly.

FAMILY DISCIPLINE.

He was accustomed to say that a man's own house should be made so uniformly pleasant and attractive, that his children would prefer it to any other place, and be able to find no superior fascinations elsewhere to induce them to wander from it for enjoyment.

This was his governing domestic principle, and he was eminently successful in its applications. He no more lived for himself at home than in the church or the store. He came into his own house after the labors of business, not merely "to be ministered unto, but to minister" to the happiness and well-being of his family. Cheerful and familiar conversation, and a lively interest in all that concerned them, won the reliance of his children, and educated them to regard him as their confidant and counsellor. Pictures, and books, and music,—all the thousand nameless charms which a wise and loving father may gather to increase the attractiveness of the parlor, were freely procured. He kept a band of music and a choir in his own house, of which his children were the performers and singers, and himself the leader. And over all these domestic arrangements, a sweet, evangelical influence predominated. Religious themes and exercises were not dragged in as a sort of penance for cheerfulness,—as harsh duties, interrupting enjoyments, to be sighed and gloomed over for a little, and then summarily dismissed. A spirit of genial piety pervaded all the intercourse of the household. The hour of family worship, regular as the family meal, was as gratefully and acceptably observed. A generous and liberal hospitality was always exercised, and many a guest recalls, as among his most pleasant hours of the past, those that were casually spent beneath the roof of James C. Crane. It is not surprising that the sons of such a father, thus trained, should give,

in youth and manhood, flattering promise of honorable and useful lives, and, by evidences of early piety, furnish consolation even under the sad bereavements which removed them, before himself, to the grave.

MUSICAL TALENT.

Superior musical talents were among the endowments which Mr. Crane consecrated to the service of God. An accurate ear, a full, clear voice, cultivated by study and practice, exquisite taste, tact and judgment, peculiarly fitted him to conduct the praise of the sanctuary and the social meeting. He was, consequently, at various times, the leader of the choir in the churches with which he was connected. He had at entire command, in his capacious memory, so large a treasury of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" and chorusses, and appropriate tunes, that he was prepared to adapt them to any occasion. Rev. Dr. W. F. Broaddus relates that he has looked on Mr. Crane with wonder and admiration, at the crowded anniversaries held in Richmond, walking up and down the aisles of the church, courteously conducting strangers to seats, while at the same time, with the hymn-book in his hand, he was effectively and gracefully leading the praises of the congregation, and guiding, by his clear voice, the melody of the whole assembly.

Not only in leading the praises of the great congregation, but at social meetings, at the fireside, in

the chamber of the sick and at the couch of the dying saint, his voice was ever sweetly heard, in sacred song as well as in counsel and in prayer.

THE LIFE OF SOCIAL MEETINGS.

His presence in the social evening meetings of the church, ensured spirited and interesting exercises. In brief, pointed addresses and exhortations and prayers, admirably adapted to time and place, seizing just the idea that seemed for the hour most instructive and impressive, tersely, strongly and clearly expressed, never wearying by prolixity or irrelevance,—Deacon Crane, as is universally admitted, was rarely excelled, even by the most thoroughly trained clergymen of the church. And from these meetings he was never absent, when at home and in health. A friend relates this incident as an illustration of his usual course. He was sent to notify him of an important meeting of an Insurance Board of which he was a member. “Any other evening in the week,” said Mr. Crane, “I will attend, but this is the night for the prayer meeting at the church, and I never leave that for any secular business.” Thus practically did he carry out the principle, “Seek first the kingdom of God.” However inclement the weather, however pressing his business in the driving seasons of the year, those who attended the appointed meetings of the church expected to see Brother Crane there; and if they were ever disappointed, they felt assured that it was for a reason that God and a good man’s conscience would approve.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

During his youth, the era of Sunday Schools opened. One among the earliest was organized in 1815, in his native city. He became connected with it, of course, for from youth till death there seemed no good thing proposed or attempted, within his reach, to which he did not give all the aid within the compass of his ability. Upon his removal to Richmond, he soon became the teacher of a little class, and within a few years was called to the superintendence of the school. His duties in this department of christian labor were no secondary or subordinate matters with him. He prosecuted them with all the enthusiasm of an earnest spirit; and so palpable were the reflex benefits of this devotion upon his own heart and life, that he was accustomed to remark, "The Sunday school has made me what I am." From his school, it may be said, almost literally, he was never absent and never late. Nothing detained him that would not as necessarily have kept him from his counting-house on a business morning. For ten consecutive years he was never absent from a single session of the Sabbath school, when in the city, and never one minute after the appointed time of opening, except upon one occasion, when a terrific snow storm made the streets almost impassable, and then, though late, he was the first one at the place after the sexton. He seemed peculiarly fitted for such a position. His administration of the government of the school was prompt, cheerful and affec-

tionate. His addresses to children and teachers were sprightly, pointed, brief and timely, deducing instruction from passing events and treasured incidents. His time, zeal, influence, money, were all freely bestowed in the prosecution of his work. He won the confidence and love of teachers and pupils, and inspired all with a laudable emulation to excel. The schools both of the Second and First Baptist Churches of Richmond, of which he was successively Superintendent, his influence aided and mainly contributed to raise to such a degree of prosperity and usefulness. He happily illustrated, in connection with this work, what capabilities for good may be evolved from one consecrated, earnest soul. In 1831, the Second Church was visited with special demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's power, and some two hundred persons were added to its communion. Mr. Crane labored intensely and devoutly, and a large proportion of this increase was gathered from the classes of his Sabbath school. For weeks, he met many of them every morning at the general sunrise prayer meeting, visited them at their homes, counselled and prayed with them in the enquiry meetings, and left no conceivable means untried to win them to Christ.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LABORS.

Nor was his devotion to this work confined to the schools with which he was immediately connected. In 1835 he resigned to other hands the superintendency of the school, and thus expressed the reasons

for his withdrawal, evincing that his highest motive was the good of the school, and his desire to enlarge the sphere of his own usefulness in promoting this blessed work:—

“For more than a year past, I have desired to be released from the claims of the Sunday school on me as its leader. The school, I know, has been blessed; and even if no fruit had appeared, I should, I hope, not wish on that account to leave it. Though I ardently desire success, and could not rest contented without it, yet the want of success would not deter me from labor. I have been there so long, that it does really seem to me that a change would be beneficial; and it is the unbounded confidence reposed in me, on the part of the teachers, which, in some degree, has induced me to wish to retire. I feel that they rely too much on me, and are, consequently, not as sensible as they ought to be of their entire dependence upon a vastly higher source, in connection with an active and prayerful use of the means. The school is now in such a state that it can easily be managed. I should be unwilling to leave it if it was in a declining state. I should calculate still to visit and encourage it. You know the feeling of responsibility which necessarily devolves on one who feels conscientious in the discharge of any duty. *I cannot undertake anything without laying myself out for it.* I could not be satisfied out of a Sunday school, nor have I the least expectation or desire ever to be satisfied out of one; yet I wish, for a while at least,

to be a little more at liberty. There are others in our church who ought to be doing more, and, indeed, others who have talents for this very office, which, if put in requisition, would be very useful. After six years' service, without a day's intermission, beside a period of about the same length of time nearly constantly engaged, I feel as though some one else ought to take the place, and release me."

He did not resign that he might repose in selfish ease, but that he might spend his Sabbaths in organizing new schools, and in visiting and encouraging such as were feeble. In this department of christian enterprise his "labors were abundant," both in their character and results. His voice was heard not only in the schools, but in public meetings, associations,—everywhere that a suitable opportunity offered, in behalf of this great christian work; and his earnestness, directness, and strong common sense, always secured him interested listeners.

PROJECTS SUNDAY SCHOOL AND PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA.

In the breadth of his devotion, he conceived plans for organizing a Sabbath school in connection with every Baptist church in Virginia; and with such an end in view, suggested the formation of the Virginia Baptist Sunday School and Publication Society, of which, for several years, he was the President. Large results have followed these efforts, and if the

ideal he proposed is not yet attained, the influences have been started that will ensure its fulfilment.

The Rev. Dr. Jeter, who was familiar with his labors, thus strongly speaks of them:—

“It is deemed no injustice to affirm, that to James C. Crane, more than to any man living or dead, the Baptists of Richmond [and might it not have been added, of Virginia?] are indebted for the high prosperity of their Sunday schools. Others have done well—he did better. He labored in the cause, early, long, diligently, in season and out of season, officially and unofficially, as teacher, superintendent and lecturer; and he labored effectively. He sowed, and others have reaped; he laid the foundation, and others have built. The results of his Sunday school labors no creature can calculate; but the All-Seeing Eye discerned the scattered seed, marked how it sprang up, watches its growth and its maturing, and sees how the crop will become the seed of another and a greater crop, and that this process will continue to the end of time, when the laborer will receive his full reward.”

Rev. J. B. Taylor adds:—

“This influence was not confined to Virginia. In his visits to other sections of the country, his voice was heard on behalf of Sunday schools. While an invalid in the Southern States, he excited such an interest in this cause as led to permanent and happy results.”

INTEREST IN FOREIGN MISSIONS.

In the same year in which young Crane—a lad of sixteen—removed to Richmond, public preaching was first commenced in the Burman language, at Rangoon, by Dr. Judson; the first Burmese converts were baptized, and the first church gathered by the labors of American missionaries, was organized in a heathen land.* The intelligence, spread among the churches in this country, stimulated the zeal and the hopes of the friends of missions. A warm interest on their progress and prosperity was enkindled in the heart of James C. Crane, which never abated. He watched, with prayerful solicitude, all the movements and labors of the missionaries, and thoroughly acquainted himself with their operations and fields of toil. The reports and periodicals of the benevolent societies were always to be found upon his table, and in his conversation and addresses he showed entire familiarity with their plans and workings. He was, at all times, an earnest, consistent, liberal advocate

* Under date of April 4, 1819, Dr. Judson writes:—"To-day the building of the Zayat being sufficiently advanced for the purpose, I called together a few people that live around us, and commenced public worship in the Burman language. I say *commenced*, for though I have frequently read and discoursed to the natives, I have never before conducted a course of exercises which deserved the name of *public worship*." "But I hope, though with fear and trembling, that I have now commenced a course of public worship and regular preaching." Moung Nau, the first Burmese convert, was baptized June 27, 1819. The next two converts were baptized Nov. 7, 1819.

of all the measures proposed by good men for the dissemination of truth and the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

He was especially interested in the mission to Africa. Mainly through the influence of his brother William and himself, Lott Carey and Colin Teage, the first Baptist missionaries from America to Africa, were encouraged, equipped and designated to that important field, in 1821. To aid in the support of this mission, a society had been organized, in 1815, among the colored members of the Richmond churches, of which society J. C. Crane was, for many years, the secretary, corresponding with the missionaries abroad and communicating with their supporters at home. This humble society he loved to represent in public anniversaries, associations and conventions. He was their special delegate in the Triennial Convention of 1832, held in the city of New York. He continued the earnest friend and liberal supporter of African missions and African colonization to the close of his life.

CATHOLIC SPIRIT.

But his faith was too broad, and his charity too catholic, to be cramped within any one department of christian benevolence; and though his preference for his own church was sincere and enlightened, yet of all the great national christian organizations—such as the American Sunday School Union, and the American Tract Society—he was a steadfast advocate. His time and his money were freely given to

promote their efficiency. His christian philanthropy embraced all classes of men. No caste nor color was excluded from his sympathies. The lowliest trusted him as a friend, and the loftiest regarded him as an efficient coadjutor in every good and useful work.

IN PUBLIC MEETINGS.

A man of such spirit and abilities, would necessarily be called to occupy prominent positions among his brethren, and he was generally a delegate at our Ecclesiastical anniversaries, placed upon the most important committees, and appointed to the boards of management. He was, for several years, Clerk, and afterwards Moderator, of the Dover Association; Secretary of the General Association of Virginia, and of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Jeter says of him:—

“He presided well, and as a clerk, he had no superior. I have heard him, on public and exciting occasions, deliver extempore addresses which would do no discredit to the most eminent speakers of the land. There was no flashing of wit, no flourish of what is miscalled eloquence; but a clear, concise, earnest, graceful discussion of the matter under consideration. Among all the laymen of the Baptist churches, none took, or was qualified to take, a more prominent position. It may be questioned whether any one, minister or layman, in the long period during which he was accustomed to attend our anniversa-

ries, exerted a stronger or more beneficent influence in them, than he."

LIBERALITY.

Mr. Crane held the money which he earned as a "steward of God." With his business qualifications and opportunities, he might have accumulated large wealth. He did accumulate, but he appropriated his money as freely as he did his time and mental abilities for the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ. From settled principle—not merely from fitful impulses—he conscientiously devoted a portion of his income to benevolent purposes. He often said that he did not mean to be rich. After a long life of lucrative traffic, he left an estate valued at some \$30,000. Greed and avarice might, perhaps, have augmented the sum by an additional figure; but his uniform beneficence was worth far more to the world than such increase could have been to his heirs. To every benevolent work he contributed liberally and cheerfully, and, by his example and counsels, fostered liberality in others. His notes in bank were not more promptly met than his subscriptions to benevolent objects, and a debt of this sort was as readily contracted and as cheerfully paid as any other. Rev. J. B. Taylor, who knew him longer and more intimately than any other clergyman, says:—"During a long connection with him as his pastor and friend, I never knew him to decline an appeal for pecuniary aid on behalf of any good object, and his contributions were always large and liberal."

In 1834, he united with his brother in the purchase of a church building, in Calvert street, Baltimore, in the hope of creating a new centre of holy influences in that great city. He also contributed generously toward the support of the pastor of that distant church.

But there is no need of adducing instances of liberality. It was not with him an occasional thing to be generous and benevolent — he was uniformly so. He was so from settled conviction of duty, not from temporary excitements. He felt that gratitude to God and duty to the world required that he should seek to do good with his money, as well as by his more direct personal influence. It is not probable that any collection was ever made in any church with which he was connected, for an object that his judgment approved, which was not enlarged by his ready liberality.

If all the members of our churches but cherished this spirit — and the obligations resting on each are as real as those recognized by Mr. Crane — the Word of God would be speedily dispensed among all nations, and the cry of the perishing for the bread of life, would be answered. There is abundant wealth in our churches to meet all the claims of christian charity; but alas for a suffering world! it is not in the hands of such men as was James C. Crane.

SPIRITUALLY MINDED.

In his christian experience, Mr. Crane had many

temptations to meet — a severe and protracted warfare to maintain. No one felt so deeply as himself that he was far from being a perfect man. He mourned over his own infirmities and failings, and struggled to subdue them. His fervent temperament, his strong will, his ardent affections, the high position of influence in the church and in the business community uniformly accorded him, while, on the one hand, they enhanced his usefulness, on the other, gave opportunities to the tempter to lure him into snares. Like all men who think quickly and speak strongly, he doubtless, sometimes, jumped at wrong conclusions, and “spake unadvisedly with his lips.” Perhaps, in his firmness, he sometimes seemed dogmatical, and in his abhorrence of every thing mean and hypocritical, he sometimes appeared censorious. In his earlier christian life, his ordinary cheerfulness may sometimes have degenerated into levity, and his clear, common-sense apprehension of the practical bearings of any subject presented for his consideration, may sometimes have inspired undue self-confidence.

But against these besetting tendencies of his nature he prayerfully watched and guarded, and conscientiously struggled to subdue the evils that were in him. Like every true-hearted character, he discovered in his own heart and life much to humble and distress him, and enough to induce him utterly to renounce all self-righteousness, and to drive him to the mediation and sacrifice of Jesus, as the only medium of justification and acceptance.

"In the freedom and intimacy of our intercourse," says Mr. Taylor, "I have heard him very often refer to his sense of the Divine purity and his own comparative unworthiness. He was eminently an humble man. No one could be intimately acquainted with him, or listen to the out-pourings of his heart in prayer, without perceiving this peculiarity."

Rev. B. Manly, Jr., for a season his pastor, says, "there was this peculiarity about Brother Crane, which is very rare. He would sometimes with his ordinary earnestness, vigorously oppose a measure projected by his brethren, and would yield very reluctantly to a decision contrary to his own judgment. But if in the prosecution of that very measure, there came a time of pressure and a need for aid, instead of holding himself aloof and triumphantly saying, 'I told you how it would be,' without a word of reproach, he would be among the most forward to contribute his counsels and his money to ensure its success."

Thus bravely did he war against self, and "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." His oft repeated maxim, learned from the venerated Dr. Semple, in cases of difference of judgment with other Christians was, "*Well, brethren, if you will not go with me, — I will go with you.*"

LETTERS.

The following extracts from a few of Mr. Crane's letters written in the ingenuousness of confidential

christian intercourse, will at once give us some insight into his inner nature, indicate some of his struggles in maintaining the spiritual warfare, illustrate his spirit and life, and suggest thoughts worthy of being pondered by every reader. They were written without the thought that they would ever meet any other eyes than those of the beloved friends to whom they were directed. Yet both in their spirit and sentiments they reveal the earnest piety of the writer, and may suggest to some, a method of doing good which perhaps they have never yet tried. Even in his business letters he often expressed the longings of his soul, for the spiritual welfare of his correspondents. And as he wrote, so he talked.

Upon the conversion and baptism of his wife and nephew in 1830, he writes to his sister, Mrs. Johnson:—

“How grateful should we be. Too little do I feel the goodness of that kind Redeemer, who saves sinners, yes, the vilest of the vile. What a mercy it is that we are not left to our own direction, and how comforting the assurance of the Scriptures that God is unchangeable and full of compassion. Oh! that I could feel more humble under this dispensation of mercy. It is all of grace; free, unmerited grace, abounding through our Lord Jesus Christ. When I feel like a poor unworthy sinner, ready to perish without mercy, then I can rejoice in Christ, view His loveliness

and fitness to my case; for then I feel that there is no other way of salvation, and I would not agree to be saved in any other way. There is so much love and wisdom and mercy and safety in this plan, that no other could give me comfort. And though sometimes I feel as if I could never be cold and dull, yet I am so prone to wander from God, I have such a wicked heart that I almost fear that I have never felt the love of God. But I will trust in Christ, for here only I find comfort. May the Lord enable me to do something to advance His cause, and the good of others, from a principle of love to Him."

THE REVIVAL IN 1831.

Under the influence of the extensive revival in Richmond, in 1831, during which nearly one thousand converts were added to the various churches, he writes thus:—

"Oh, that you could have been here and witnessed what we have! But such scenes you never saw. My dear sister, how much to be lamented it is, that after such displays of divine power and mercy, we should ever feel cold and find our hearts hard and our affections wandering after comfort among the trifling things of this vain world! You know how to sympathize with me when I tell you I have a wicked heart, a cold and deceitful heart, prone to forget God, and depart

from Him. Is it not surprising, after we had so much, and so long sinned against God, He should ever have thoughts of mercy towards us, and propose terms of reconciliation so simple and plain, that we cannot misunderstand them, and so safe that we may trust with confidence? I have lately had more anxious desires to be useful than ever before, and yet I am asleep on this all-important subject. How much time have I wasted! A few days since I found myself twenty eight years old, and yet I have done so little for Him in whose hand my life is and whose are all my ways. For more than half my life I have professed to be a disciple of Christ, and how far from God have I lived, and how much I have to repent of. I have been engaged, teaching a Bible class, and it is now ten o'clock, and I cannot write much. Oh, that I might be more entirely devoted to the service of God! In looking around us we can see our friends and acquaintances on every side, exposed to the wrath of God, and careless. The Saviour died for sinners! Can we not pray and labor for them? How can we be satisfied, while they are in danger! Tell A—— and E—— and M—— to trust in the Lord for strength, and begin to work for His glory, and for the salvation of sinners, and in the path of duty they will certainly find peace."

After giving a somewhat detailed account of this revival to another sister, Mrs. Mourrons, and speaking of attending meetings every night for

eight weeks, and "not getting to bed before from twelve to two o'clock," because though exhausted he was not able to sleep, he says:—

"I have found a pleasure in trying to do good, that I cannot describe. Although, very frequently, while I have been endeavoring to point others to the Saviour and explain to them the simplicity and beauty of the plan of salvation, and the love of God in giving His Son to die for sinners, I have been unable to place that confidence in the word of God which would give me solid joy, yet I could not avoid begging others to look to Christ, and rejoice in Him. I know if I had not a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," I could always find comfort in contemplating the faithfulness of the promises in the Gospel. Oh, how prone I am to wander, and how ungrateful it is ever to neglect so kind a Parent as our God is! *Oh, that my heart and thoughts might be chained to the service and glory of God!* and that I might every day and every hour, exhibit my love for the Lord, by such conduct and conversation as should induce others to esteem religion, as the one thing needful. This solemn question frequently occurs with force to my mind: *Shall I at the last day behold on the left hand of the Judge, one soul, toward whom I have not performed my duty, or in whose salvation I might have been instrumental?*

"As the Saviour has died for sinners, shall we fail to urge upon them the necessity of fleeing

to Him for safety, and shall any perish when such rich provision has been made for their redemption? Tell W——to go on to know the Lord and try to serve Him, and do all the good he can. No matter what object is presented, if it is good, let us go at it with all our might. Tell D——and R——and E——and A——to seek the Lord now. They cannot do it too young, they will never regret it, and it will be a matter of joy to them through eternity.”

To a niece, of whose recent hopeful conversion he had been informed, he thus expresses his warm sympathy and solicitude:—

“I assure you I can rejoice with you, and I have wished every day since your letter came, to be in Newark, and sing one of our favorite songs, with the chorus, ‘I’ll praise Him’ with you all. Now you can estimate real happiness. Oh! how interesting is that plan of salvation which gives the most comfort when we feel most like poor sinners, which cheers us with the blessed hope, that although we now mourn over our sins and imperfections, and especially over those which are known only to ourselves and our God—our secret sins—we may anticipate the period when freed from all these, we shall be perfectly happy in the presence of that Redeemer, whom ‘having not seen we love.’ And what infinite pleasure it will create to be with Him, who so loved us as to come into

our world, and after obeying the law for us, also to die for us. Surely we ought to love and serve Him as long as we live. Our anxious enquiry ought to be every hour, 'Lord, what *wilt Thou* have me to do?' How shall I best promote Thy glory, and exhibit Thy praise to all around me?

"I have frequently thought of the case of Paul. As soon as he found peace in Christ, he was anxiously desirous to do something, and it seems natural (if *anything* in religion is so) for one to ask, 'what shall I do for God?' as soon as they trust in His mercy and behold the glory and safety of the gospel scheme.

"You will find much trouble from a wicked heart; from wicked thoughts, and a proneness to wander from God and seek comfort somewhere else. The wicked One will try all his arts to draw you from your confidence. But would you subdue your own heart and will, and bring your affections into subjection to the will of God, the only means by which you can hope to accomplish this, are reading with deep attention the sacred truths of the Bible; and ardent prayer to God. And in attending to these duties, we should make them our business, and they should under no circumstances be neglected.

COUNSELS TO A CONVERT.

"I have had some sad experience on this subject. How often have I been left to mourn the absence

of the consolations which are found in religion, because I had not used the means to obtain those consolations! Do not live as cold and formal as I do, or as anybody else does; but take the example of the Saviour, and whatever or however others do, try to set others an example. You have just begun to live; now see how much good you can do. Do not sit still and mourn over sin, and imperfection, and complain that you can do nothing. Mark the words of the apostle John, 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.' Let us leave our salvation with our Advocate, who is all-prevalent, and strive against sin, and do good to all. But why need I thus advise you? I had better admonish myself. How far short of these directions, found in the last will and testament of our Master, does my practice come! As this is written in great haste, you must excuse its desultory character, and believe me

Your affectionate Uncle,

JAMES C. CRANE."

ALL CHRISTIANS—MINISTERS.

To a nephew pondering the question of devoting his life to the work of the Gospel ministry, he writes as follows:—

MY DEAR A——.

I suppose, ere this, you have concluded either to commence preparation for the ministry, or to content yourself with moving in a more humble sphere of

action. Whatever your conclusions may be on this subject, I hope you are not less desirous to do all you can for the salvation of sinners and the glory of God, but that these desires are rather growing and increasing. But what shall I say? I should be glad to see you useful, and if you are impressed with the idea that you ought to warn sinners publicly, and proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to a dying world, I feel no hesitation in saying that you ought to do so. * * * * *

If, however, the obstacles in the way are such as to deter you from pursuing this course, you can find objects enough in which to engage and make yourself useful. Temperance societies, Sunday schools, Tract and all Benevolent operations of the present day, are to be pushed forward by the exertions of Christians, and these are doing much under the blessing of the great Head of the church, toward the accomplishment of the promises and prophecies relating to 'the latter day glory;' and what an honor it is to be permitted to be 'co-workers together with God!' How interesting the thought, that we may be the means of bringing sinners to trust in the glorious Redeemer, and be prepared for usefulness in this world, and happiness in another. But I must conclude, as you know I always write in a hurry.

Affectionately, etc.

AFFLICTIONS.

In 1832, there was severe and protracted sickness

in his family, several of its members being brought near to death, and one of his sons carried to the grave. After speaking, in a letter to his sister, of his anxiety and fatigue, he continues:—

“ But I have spent time enough in giving you a tale of woe. The Lord has been rich in mercy toward us through it all, and I hope I can pray that these afflictions may be sanctified to us. He has taken away one of our little ones; but He gave, and in depriving us of this source of comfort and happiness, has done what is right. We are so shortsighted, that we cannot perceive how “all things work together for our good.” But our faith should rest on the word and promise of our best friend—our God. How pleasant to reflect, in the midst of affliction, and when surrounded by disease, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Heavenly Father’s notice, and that he exercises a watch over us. Who would exchange the confidence and privileges of the Christian for all the world can afford? Well might the poet sing, while contemplating the hope of the Christian, both as regards the present world and the future,—

‘A hope so much divine
May trials well endure.’

But, alas! with such a hope,—with promises emanating from the Great God,—with consolations the value of which this world will never unfold to us, my rebellious, ungrateful heart, wanders from God. I

find myself discontented and unhappy, and not unfrequently, ere I am aware of it, I am asking, Why all this affliction? Why all these trials? May the Lord preserve me from a murmuring spirit!"

SINNERS CONVERTED WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE
DEVOUT.

In a letter written during a season of spiritual declension, we find the following just and appropriate reflections:—

"We keep up our meetings, but they are all formal, and very little like what they ought to be. Our Sunday schools are in a tolerably good condition, but there are no additions to any of our churches. The reason, no doubt, is, that Christians are worldly, and cold, and inactive. Careless sinners seldom feel, unless a revival takes place among those who profess to understand the value of souls and the love of Jesus. The Saviour, no doubt, intended that Christians should be active and instrumental in the salvation of sinners, when He said, 'Ye are the light of the world!' 'Ye are the salt of the earth!' Our lives and conduct should be a practical comment on the truth of the Gospel. We ought to reprove others by our example and influence, as well as by our profession. I think, sometimes, I ought to abandon the cause of God, unless I could give better evidence that I am sincere. Oh! how shall we feel when, on a dying bed, we look back on the past, and forward to the bar of God? We shall then wonder that we

could have felt such a deep interest in the vanities of the world, and so little for the souls of poor sinners and for the glory of our Divine Master, who loved us and died for us. We repay His love and compassion with coldness and ingratitude such as would destroy the regard and friendship of our best earthly friends. How forcibly does Newton express my feelings sometimes:—

‘If I love, why am I thus?

Why this dull and lifeless frame?’”

SYMPATHY WITH THE BEREAVED.

In 1846, upon the death of a beloved niece — Mrs. C. Woodruff—two years younger than himself, who had been the household companion of his boyhood, he thus writes:—

“What shall I say? I do most deeply sympathize with all of you, and this language is too feeble to express my feelings. I am carried back to the scenes of childhood, and many interesting incidents, which had quite faded from my memory, have, by this event, been revived. I remember the fond attachments of bygone days, the school lessons, the singing, the visits to the house of God when we were young, the conversations on the subject of religion, the parting scenes when I first left home, the joy of meeting on my first return,—all sweetened by fraternal affection, sincere and uninterrupted. And then, too, the letters which during the first years of our separation, ere we were both engrossed with

other cares, which passed between us. A dozen sheets would not suffice to record the reminiscences with which my mind is crowded. But why dwell on them? *All, all* is past. Yet there is to me a sweetness even in the recollection, and these reflections are the more pleasant, because of the even tenor of her feelings and the kind affectionateness of manner in which, I may say it now, she excelled all of us. But she is gone, and I can scarcely realize that I shall never see her again. I would not chide your tears, but rather mingle mine with them. I still rejoice that our loss is her eternal gain. On this point I should have been as well satisfied without dying testimony as with it, knowing that the *life* of the Christian is that which makes the character, and while I would not undervalue the dying evidence—nay rejoice in it—yet it is more consoling to retrospect the life, to ‘mark the perfect man and behold the upright,’ in regard to dear departed friends, assured that perfection (I do not mean sinless) and uprightness in life, have the promise of a peaceful end.

SYMPATHY WITH THE BEREAVED.

I know not what consolations to offer, nor do I feel that you need any beyond those which you already possess. You well know that our Father is a present—yes, ‘a *present* help in time of trouble.’ Her bereaved husband, also, knows by

experience, that 'like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those that fear Him.' Indeed in this case I feel that I am one of you, and though time and distance has separated us, yet I suffer with you. But let us remember that this is one of the 'all things' which 'work together for good to them that love God.' * * * * *

"For the dear children I feel deeply. They have lost a pious, prudent and affectionate mother, and they will longer feel the loss than the rest; but a mother's prayers will not be in vain, and I pray God a mother's example will not be lost to them." * * * * *

REFLECTIONS IN SICKNESS.

While confined to his house by illness of several weeks' duration, in 1849, he relates the spiritual exercises of his soul, and the consolations he experiences, in these words:—

"* * * * * If the Lord designs anything more for me to do, He will give me health and strength to perform it; and if not, I desire to be submissive. I wish I could feel entirely so. * * * We are as we always have been, greatly blessed; indeed these *light afflictions* are probably our richest blessings, if we only could realize it.

During my confinement, I have been led to consider, as ordinarily the bustle of worldly business gives me little chance to do, and I have found great reason to condemn myself. I have found

that my heart is deeply depraved, my will stubborn and unresigned, my affections fixed on the world, my passions and evil habits hard to control; in short, all, all polluted, — *hopelessly so*, — so far as any effort of my own is available. I certainly was never more fully convinced of my own depravity. If I have any hope, it is only in an almighty Saviour. If saved at all, it must be ‘all of grace,’ — free, unmerited, sovereign grace. * * * Sometimes I rejoice in the hope of the Gospel, and I think I could always rejoice in it, if I was not so unworthy, for surely it is worthy of all confidence and joy. The blessed Saviour is ‘the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely,’ whether my hard and insensible heart will admire and love Him or not. He is worthy of all affection and honor, and implicit obedience, however feebly I may appreciate His excellences or fail cheerfully to acknowledge and submit to Him. * * * I think I can say, however, that my affliction has not been entirely lost upon me; and I really feel that it is the desire of my heart, more in retirement to enjoy the comforts of religion, than in the more active duties in the service of the Lord.”

BEREAVEMENTS

The spiritual graces of the Christian are disciplined by affliction, as well as tested by prosperity. We have seen in what spirit Mr. Crane responded to the favoring providences of the Lord. We have now to contemplate him as subject to some of the saddest

trials that can befall man. During the last six years of his life, his domestic afflictions were very severe.

His sons, as might be expected from such training as we have described, gave high promise of becoming honorable, influential and useful members of society. From their youth, they were admired as manly, healthful, intelligent and exemplary lads. Rev. Mr. Taylor says of them: — "With these boys I was intimate from infancy, and never have I known more striking and beautiful exemplifications of the influence of proper religious training."

THOMAS RUST CRANE.

In 1849, the third son, Thomas Rust, in the nineteenth year of his age, actively engaged in business as a clerk in a hardware store, exhibited symptoms of that subtle and fatal disease, consumption. In a few months, it completed its insidious work. On the 2d of June, 1850, the afflicted father thus writes: —

"To-day I am in the house, which is unusual on the Lord's day, with the corpse of our dear Thomas, awaiting the hour of burial. He has been, as you know, lingering for more than a year, and yesterday morning he was released from his pains and suffering. We have good reason to hope that he is in the enjoyment of those 'pleasures which are at the right hand of God; of that fulness of joy which is in His presence for evermore.'

He never talked much; but for more than a month

past has given satisfactory evidence of preparation, and with a full and frequently expressed conviction that he must soon die, he has been resigned and composed. An hour before he died, he told me his mind was easy, and that he could willingly trust all in the hands of Jesus. His last moments were spent in prayer, and the last words he was heard to utter, a few moments before his death, were, — ‘O Lord, receive my spirit, for Christ’s sake, not my own.’ Though his sufferings were very severe, he never murmured, but said, ‘All is right.’

He is gone, and we deeply feel his loss, but desire to be resigned. I cannot now write more.

I received the paper containing the notice of Daniel’s death, and should have written, but all our feelings and interest have been engrossed with Thomas. Give my love to E——. I deeply sympathize with her, and hope she will enjoy the consolations of our holy religion, which is adapted to our afflictions.”

Even in his own deep grief, he does not fail to commend the sustaining consolations of the Gospel to other mourners.

On the same day upon which the above was written, the family lot in Hollywood Cemetery opened its first grave.

ROBERT SEMPLE CRANE.

In 1852, his fourth son, Robert Semple, was seized by the same fearful malady. Parental solicitude and

medical wisdom suggested a voyage to South America, in the hope of arresting the disease. The parents parted with their boy, to meet him no more on earth. He died on the return voyage, February 3, 1853, and his remains are among the dead which, at last, "the sea must give up." His well marked Bible, — his mother's gift, — and his diary during the passage home, gave consolatory evidence that, through faith in his Redeemer, he had gained the victory over death.

His parents parted with him with mournful apprehensions, as the following extracts from a letter, written Oct. 28, 1852, evince: —

"We have been quite sad. Within the last ten days Robert's voice has entirely failed, so that he cannot speak above a whisper. After a good deal of anxiety in regard to its propriety, he has left, this week, on a sea voyage to Rio Janeiro, to be absent all winter. We hope it may benefit him; but we are not free from apprehension that we may never see him more. He is in the Lord's hands, and we desire to be resigned to His will, for that is best."

Three days before the death of this son, while he was far distant on the broad ocean, he thus expresses his hope of meeting him: —

"I expect to leave for New Orleans next Monday, if the Lord will. I hope to meet Robert there, though we have not heard from him since he left."

The vessel reached its port in due time, but the body of his son had been left behind, in the deep sea.

JAMES TAYLOR CRANE.

Before the death of his brothers, the second son, James Taylor, was stricken by the insatiable archer. He lingered longer than the others; but the skill of physicians, the prayers of parents, the influence of southern journeys, availed not. He was in New Orleans when the intelligence of his brother's death reached him, and he returned home to die. He had been for several years a consistent and active member of the church, and was admired and sincerely loved by a wide circle of friends.

During his illness, under date of August 20, 1853, his father thus pours out his sorrows and his consolations in a letter to a nephew:—

“I cannot leave home, on account of James T. He is now very feeble, only able to walk across the room, and requires constant attention. His voice is nearly gone. He can only whisper, and his frame is emaciated so that he has no strength. He is fully aware of his condition, and entirely resigned. We know not how long he is to suffer, but we desire to be submissive and patient. I sometimes feel that my afflictions are greater than I can bear. My own health, I know, has suffered by my nervous weakness, induced by what we have suffered.

For four years we have been looking upon our

dying children; and while I know it is all right, and hope I can sometimes feel submissive and entirely resigned, yet the trial is a severe one. We loved our boys, and had reason to love them; and to see them stricken down by hopeless and lingering disease, just as they come to manhood, and our fondest hopes in regard to them are about to be realized, is an affliction from which I pray you may be delivered. There are, however, sources of consolation. The Lord has, we have good reason to believe, prepared them for the change; and I sometimes feel, when I see the sons of others become profligate and vicious, that ours are blessings, after all."

On the 16th of September, in the city of Baltimore, where the family were temporarily residing, this son clasped the hand of a dear friend who bent over him, in both of his, and whispering, "I cannot talk much, *but all is well,*" fell asleep in Jesus.

DAVID ROPER CRANE.

Sorrow upon sorrow rolled their bitter waves over the hearts of the bereaved parents. Their eldest son, David Roper—partner with his father, and for the last few years his successor in business—gave evidence that he, too, had been summoned by the same rapacious destroyer to join his brothers in the grave. He had manifested, in business and as a member of the church, all his father's energy and consecration, united with most winning amiability, meekness and

constancy. To human scrutiny, he seemed almost without a fault. Nor was his nature a merely passive one: he was active, energetic, persevering, in whatever he undertook.

Simultaneously with this son's decline, the cough and the fever began to weaken the father's frame, and together they calmly walked down into the valley of the shadow of death.

TRIALS AND CONSOLATIONS.

In December, 1853, Brother Crane thus wrote:—

“I know what it is to pass wearisome, sleepless nights, and days of nervous anxiety, prostration of body, and, added to all, depression of mind. What can we do, after all, but trust in the Lord? He is our only source of comfort. I have been sometimes greatly depressed, in view of the vileness and depravity of my own heart. Oh! how frequently I have felt the force of that language,—“Lord, I am vile!” It seems to me that even sovereign grace can scarcely meet such a case as mine,—so much ingratitude and murmuring. But then the love of Christ is so great, and the Father so loved us as to give Him to die, and He, while we were yet sinners, gave His life a ransom for us! It is all a wonder of mercy, incomprehensible to us poor blind mortals, but rich, unspeakably rich, and I must trust in the Saviour. Oh, that I could love him as I ought! I desire so to look to Him, that all other objects shall vanish away. ‘None but Jesus can do helpless sin-

ners good.' 'He is the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;' and sometimes I feel as though I can cheerfully trust all in His hands, and rejoice. We can glorify our Lord more by a quiet, submissive spirit under suffering, than in any other way. And then, too, if we are in Christ, we may, with the great Apostle, 'reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.' Of that glory we know nothing now, but we shall know. Job said:— 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;' and what else could he do? where else could he trust? And where now can a guilty sinner go, but to Him 'whose blood cleanseth from all sin?'

"Sometimes, when I think of these precious truths, I feel like exclaiming:—

'Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near,
And for my relief, will shortly appear.'

"I have written much more than I expected. I may never see you again in this world, but I have a hope that we shall meet again in the Christian's final home."

IN AIKEN, S. C.

The winter of 1854 was passed by Mr. Crane and his son David, in Aiken, S. C., in the hope that its climate might prove beneficial. The following are extracts from a letter written thence January 3d, 1854:—

"* * * One great difficulty with us is, that we are all the time looking at ourselves and trusting to ourselves for comfort. We often mourn over our own depravity, vileness and unworthiness, and allow ourselves to be depressed and distressed, forgetting that the Saviour was provided for just such depraved, vile and unworthy sinners as we are. *That* is His glory, — thanks to God for it, — Jesus came not to save the righteous, but *the lost*. * * * * *He now* says, as when on earth, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.' Now what can I do? —

'A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall:
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour, and my all.'

"Will such a kind Saviour, after making such promises, let me perish? No! Begone such unbelief! I will rejoice in such love and mercy, whether saved or not. I will fall at His feet, and adoring say: —

'Here, Lord, I give myself away;
'Tis all that I can do.'

"I cannot refuse to confide all my interests in the hands of such a Saviour. * * * * We can have no other hope: we want no other. I have been trying to look away from myself. I am tired and disgusted with myself, — such a poor, wicked, helpless sinner. I wish to leave myself in the hands

of the Saviour, and then contemplate His love and the multitude of blessings I have received, until my heart is *full* of love and gratitude to him, — so full that I cannot withhold the praise of joyful lips and the labor of willing hands to promote His glory.”

In the spring, father and son returned home, to arrange their business, and to die.

While at the Red Sulphur Springs, in August, 1854, mourning his own bereavements, and from a blissful experience of the consolations he commends to others, he thus condoles with a correspondent upon the loss of a father: —

“* * * I do very deeply sympathize with you, and if it was in my power, would gladly try to comfort you. But vain are all the helps which man can afford. The wound is beyond his reach; and while the sympathy of loved relatives and kind friends is grateful to the lacerated heart, as I know well in my sad experience, yet only *One* can administer suitable comfort. Thanks to the grace of the Gospel, ‘there is a balm for every wound,’ and a never-failing, always-present, cheerfully willing friend to apply it.”

October 28th, 1854, he writes to his niece: —

“* * * * I am very anxious to see you all; but the probabilities are that I shall never visit Newark again. I am only living now by the day. I know not how soon or how suddenly I may be called. I

often think of those lines of Dr. Watts which your mother taught me in my childhood, and which we sung so much when you was a child:—

‘I am not concerned to know,’ etc.

I wish I could divest myself of too much concern for the future. My desire is to leave all in the hands of Him without whose knowledge ‘not a sparrow falls to the ground.’”

On the 2d of July, 1855, in the 30th year of his age, his son David calmly bade farewell to the dear ones that pressed around him, commended his young wife to trust confidingly in God, committed his babe to its mother’s pious training and its Heavenly Father’s care, and softly murmuring, “Accepted in the Beloved,” breathed out his spirit and entered upon his rest.

LAST LETTER

The last letter we have seen from the pen of Brother Crane, was written the week after this terrible trial, and dated Huguenot Springs, July 10, 1855:—

“MY DEAR M——:

“Your letter and C——’s were received last Sunday. I have been anxious to write you every day since dear David was taken from us; but I could not write; and even now I know not how to control my feelings enough to attempt it. But I must give you a few lines.

“David had been declining from the very day A—— and C—— saw him, more rapidly than before. He would, however, so far rally, a day or two, as to seem better than before. Week before last, he insisted on coming to the city. * * * His mother went out and brought him in, [from his father-in-law’s residence, six miles from Richmond.] He told me he had but little time to live, and wished to come to Richmond once more; and Julia [David’s wife] tells me, since his death, that he wished to die in Richmond. * * * * On Monday, about one o’clock, I saw that he was going. I was greatly overcome, and after two or three failures, I went to him, took his hand, and asked him to look at me, and if he knew me perfectly. He replied, ‘Yes, father.’

“I said, — ‘Is your trust now all in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour?’

“He promptly replied, — ‘Only in Christ. I am ready!’ And raising his eyes, he said, ‘Accepted in the Beloved!!’

“I was overcome, and all burst into tears. He continued to converse as much as he could, bade his mother and myself good bye, repeatedly told Julia [his wife] to trust in the Lord, to bring his babe up for the Lord. He was perfectly conscious, and the last words we could understand were, ‘The will of the Lord!’

“On Tuesday his remains were taken to the church, where a large congregation was assembled, and thence to Hollywood, to rest beside our other loved

ones, until the trump shall call them from sleep to an immortality where there is no sickness nor death."

SHADOWS.

Brother Crane was conscious that his own pilgrimage on earth was now nearly over. He talked frequently and calmly of his approaching departure, and deliberately arranged and closed up all his worldly affairs. During the last few weeks of his life, he suffered as few men have ever suffered. Day and night he sat in a chair, with his head bowed over on a frame before him, unable to lie, recline or sit erect. Yet no murmur escaped his lips. His confidence in the wisdom and benevolence of God's dispensation toward him, was firm and unwavering. He conversed freely and constantly with all who came into his dying chamber, exhorting the impenitent to seek Christ, and the pious to strive after greater holiness and usefulness. He renounced all dependence upon his own upright life and beneficent labors, and looked for acceptance only as a poor sinner, relying alone on the righteousness and advocacy of Jesus Christ. He looked back over his life, and while grateful for what grace had prompted and strengthened him to do, renounced, in direct and emphatic terms, all reliance upon his good works as a ground of hope of salvation. "None but Jesus!" none but Jesus!!" was the prevailing tone of his conversation. Not transported with raptures, yet he was not depressed by fears or doubts of his acceptance with God.

A friend said to him, a few hours before he died : — “ Brother Crane, in looking over your past life, do you see anything in its general course that you would change, if you could ? ”

He remained silent, thoughtful, for a few moments, and, raising his head, replied : — “ As to its main current, No ! ! ”

What a beautiful tribute, uttered in the honest hour of death, to a life early consecrated and faithfully devoted to the service of Christ !

DYING IN CHRIST.

On the 31st day of March, 1856, in the 53d year of his age, breathing a blessing upon his faithful wife and only surviving child, — a lad some twelve years old, — and whispering, after severe paroxysms of pain, “ Kind friends ! ” “ Kind Redeemer ! ! ” “ I can trust Him ! ! ” “ Come, Lord Jesus ! ! ! ” he was released from his fearful sufferings, and welcomed to his everlasting repose.

FUNERAL.

A vast concourse of friends and citizens, crowding the spacious edifice of the First Baptist Church, attended his funeral, and in the services, pastors of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches participated. Those who had known him longest and most intimately, spoke most warmly and tearfully in his praise.

“ Let there be no parade of drums or arms about

my grave," said he to his pastor, a few days before he died, as a military funeral was passing his window, but let Christians sing there the hymn:—

‘Jesus, Lover of my soul.’”

This request was not forgotten, and with tremulous voices and tearful eyes, the people of God chanted this hopeful requiem, while the evening shadows of the holly and the pine quivered over the coffin and the grave.

A tall granite shaft, erected by “The Richmond Fire Association,”—an Insurance Company,—of which he was the President at his death, marks the spot where his dust reposes, upon which is engraven the text from which his funeral sermon was preached,—“THOU SHALT BE MISSED, FOR THY SEAT WILL BE EMPTY.”

But his more lasting epitaph is inscribed in the hearts that loved him, and in the influences for good which he originated on earth, and which will follow him as an everlasting reward in heaven.

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and *their works do follow them.*”

We have thus attempted to sketch the life and characteristics of *a christian merchant*. As completely as in any life we have ever known, the conduct and spirit of James C. Crane illustrated the idea which this phrase conveys. He was, in the loftiest sense,

an honest and an honorable man; he was a devout communicant in the church of Christ, and he was more than all this,—in the prosecution of his secular business, as well as in his social and ecclesiastical relations, *he was controlled by pious principles, imbued with a pious spirit, and wrought for pious ends.*

MORE THAN AN HONEST MAN.

If his life is a worthy illustration of this idea, then a christian merchant is *more than an honest man.*

It is but faint praise — negative and sterile — to commend one for simple honesty. It is merely saying that he will not defraud a neighbor, nor take an unfair advantage of any man's ignorance or need.

It is rather a sad evidence of the depravity of the race, that strict uprightness in business transactions should be deemed worthy of peculiar laudation. What is a man, if not honest? There are no words in any language that describe characteristics of the human heart and conduct intermediate between honesty and dishonesty, nor can we conceive of such characteristics, except in infants and idiots. Every sane person is in character either honest or dishonest. He cannot be neither the one nor the other. And men pronounce a bitter satire upon their race when they admiringly quote the familiar line, —

“An honest man's the noblest work of God.”

We should be sorry to believe that honest men are

so scarce as to warrant such special and enthusiastic eulogy. This would imply that the masses of mankind were perfidious; that duplicity was the general law of conduct, and probity the exception.

HONESTY, NEGATIVE.

Dishonesty, when uniform, is imposture; when occasional, is knavery; when projecting great gain, is scoundrelism; when taking little advantages, is meanness. When we say of a man that he is honest, then, we mean that he is not guilty of any such wrongs against his fellow-men. And if such practices render one positively base and criminal, then to refrain from them deserves no particular praise. The honesty of which so many boast, as though it were equivalent to piety, is, after all, only a negative quality — the abstaining from positive wrong.

This same honesty has been eulogized entirely beyond its merits. There is but a low hedge, easily surmounted, between the realms of rectitude and fraud; and if he who leaps over is censurable and guilty, then he who simply maintains his proper place on the right side, deserves all the praise that a firm and uniform resistance to temptation warrants, and no more.

You do not express peculiar admiration of a gentleman's character because he passes out of your hall without stealing your coat, or finds a lost pocket-book and restores it to the owner. What is there, then, so peculiarly admirable in a tradesman's character if we

can say of him that he would not deceive or defraud a customer? Does a man illustrate all the virtues because he will not lie or cheat? But if he did either, he would forfeit all our confidence and respect, and prove himself unprincipled and vicious.

What less can we say of a man worthy of any esteem and regard, than that he is honest and truthful? The mildest negation set before such adjectives is severe censure and condemnation. There is a wider space than this between vice and excellency in virtue.

NO PIETY WITHOUT INTEGRITY.

A christian merchant is an honest man, of course. Piety without integrity is a contradiction, necessary and direct. Whatever may be "the customs of trade,"—whatever profits a loose morality might accumulate, a christian man will not deceive nor defraud another,—will not defile his own soul by falsehood or false representations,—will not suffer any man to deceive himself in traffic with him. He will be scrupulously honorable and fair in his dealings with men. If he is not this, he has no right to write Christian before his name. And all this is his least excellency.

A CHRISTIAN MERCHANT.

There is more implied in this phrase than that a man is a communicant in a christian church, attentive, interested and consistent in his observance

of all that ecclesiastical "common law" requires. There is a "common law" in our churches which differs widely from the statute law, coded in the Holy Oracles—a sort of public sentiment which is satisfied with a lower measure of consecration than the Scriptures demand. It tolerates mere subjective propriety; and he whose life expresses simply a negative goodness, fulfils the conditions upon which church fellowship is accorded. It is content with quiescence and passive conformity. He who attends with decent regularity upon the services of the sanctuary,—who does nothing palpably wrong, may, from youth to old age, maintain a creditable membership in a church.

WORK SUPERADDED TO EMOTIONS.

But the man whose character we delineate is a Christian of altogether another type. He makes the Word of God, and not the examples of men—even of pious men—the rule of his life. He comprehends that Christianity requires activities as well as consistencies; that piety is obedience, as well as submission; work, as well as experience. As he understands the word, piety is more than pardon, and peace and hope more than prayer and praise and communion—more than refraining from wrong and abstaining from the very "appearance of evil." It is "work," "labor," "self-denial," "sacrifice." There are "strongholds" to be pulled down, and a "living temple" to be erected; "wicked works" to be de-

stroyed, and a "kingdom" to be extended. There is a "race" to be "run," a "warfare" to be accomplished, a "course" to be fulfilled. There are the "hungered" to feed, the "thirsty" to give drink, the "stranger" to take in, the "naked" to clothe, the "sick" to comfort, the "prisoner" to visit. He sees that, if he perform not such duties, he will be rejected of Jesus at the judgment.

BIBLE WORDS.

The words found in the Bible, descriptive of christian duties, are such as these:—"Do," "Work," "Labor," "Exercise," "Serve," "Strive," "Perform," "Convert," "Finish." The spirit in which such activities are to be employed is portrayed by such terms as these:—"Zealous," "Watchful," "Diligent," "Fervent," "Vigilant," "Not weary," "Persevere," "Hold out to the end," "Steadfast," "Endure."

With such words sparkling upon every page of Holy Writ, how can a true disciple of Jesus be satisfied with mere inactive consistency? How can he be content with doing no harm, when it is essential to his vocation to do good? The end of his calling is, not his own comfort nor enjoyment, nor even salvation, but the glorifying of God, by the activities of a pious life. A true christian life consists, not simply in integrity and consistency, — not merely in formalities and regularities, — not only in emotions and experience, — not alone in praying and singing and communing; but in energies, in labors, in sacrifices,

—in doing good every day, — in improving all opportunities of usefulness, — in doing, “whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

A christian merchant, then, we conceive to be one who aims to govern his whole life and business according to *pious principles*, in a *pious spirit*, and for *pious ends*.

By the term pious, in such a connection, we mean having reference to the will and pleasure of God.

PIOUS PRINCIPLES.

The PRINCIPLES have regard to the character of his business, as well as to the general character of his life. Is the trade or traffic in which he is engaged right in itself, — in accordance with God’s Word, — in harmony with the true interests and well-being of humanity? The christian tradesman must start there. It must be his fixed purpose and plan of life to engage in no business that is hostile to God’s will, or in conflict with the purity and welfare of his kind. His conscience must be satisfied that his business is positively such as his Maker and Judge will approve, — as is adapted to promote the comfort, well-being or allowable enjoyments of his fellow-men; such that he may, with an approving conscience, pray for its prosperity; such that its vigorous prosecution shall promote the common good of mankind. If it have not these features and tendencies, a christian man has no right to engage in it.

A RIGHT BUSINESS.

A pious man cannot, therefore, in consistency with the principles by which he professes to be governed, conduct a gambling-house, a distillery, or a dram-shop. He cannot pray that he may be prosperous in any such traffic, for he cannot but be conscious that the more it is enlarged, the more his fellow-men are injured and depraved. All such modes of support he will firmly decline, as tending rather to the glory of the devil than to the glory of God.

But as God is glorified in His providential government by whatever tends to promote the welfare, comfort, or innocent enjoyments of His creatures; as even the luxuries of life illustrate the bounty and munificence of the Creator; as He has crowded the earth with even superfluities, to enhance the happiness of man, in all His works superadding beauty to mere utility, — so the devout child of God may work in unison with his Maker. He may paint a picture, cultivate a garden of flowers, manufacture elegant ornaments, as well as make a shoe or sew a coat, or plant a tree, and feel that he is operating in harmony with the omnipotent Worker, from whose hand are perpetually distributed things of beauty, as well as things of use.

Being satisfied that his business is right in itself, the christian tradesman will conduct it in conformity with scriptural principles. He will not permit himself to do anything that is dishonorable, or deceptive, or fraudulent. He will rather lose a bargain than

leave a stain on his conscience, a bitter memory in his heart, or a sense of self-debasement upon his soul.

A PIOUS SPIRIT.

The christian merchant, in his intercourse with his fellow-men, will seek to evince that he is controlled by a *pious spirit*. He will seek to illustrate the graces of Christianity in the counting-house and the market-place as really as in the church. He will exhibit as sweet and attractive exemplifications of piety in his business as in his family prayers. It is amid the jostling throng of the store and the street, in contact and collision with stirring men, that Christians find opportunities for self-discipline, and for the exercise of forbearance, charity, meekness, humility, kindness and good-will. If these graces are not cultivated amid the grinding business of life, they will be cultivated nowhere. There are but few occasions wherein they may be exercised in the sanctuary, the prayer-meeting, or the closet. Wrong affections and evil passions are not excited in connection with formal religious observances, but they are in the collisions of traffic; and, consequently, it is just here that they are to be suppressed and crucified, and the opposite graces to be educated. If this culture and exemplification of the christian virtues be not practised in connection with the ordinary business of life, they will scarcely be practised anywhere. This is the very place for their application; there is, comparatively, but little room or occasion for them else-

where. No man can be godless on 'Change and godly at home, — a saint at church, and a sinner at the warehouse. The true christian temper and spirit are most gracefully revealed when most severely tried. As the colors of the rainbow are reflected brightest from the blackest cloud, so the christian graces shine out most beautifully when most directly contrasted with the selfishness and depravity of men.

PIOUS ENDS.

The christian merchant, too, in all his business, will keep *pious ends* in view. One of these ends, as already intimated, will be the spiritual discipline of his own soul. He can "grow in grace" only by exercising his graces; and this exercise is to be secured only in actual contact and conflict with the world. Hence all the passing events of life he will seek to make contributory to the cultivation of the christian virtues. He will be constantly learning how to resist temptation, how to repress evil passions, how to subdue wrong affections, how to educate forbearance, forgetfulness, charity and meekness. If this be kept in view as one of the ends of the struggles of life, nothing can transpire that will not conduce to his spirituality.

A GODLY EXAMPLE

Another end to be steadfastly pursued, is the exemplifying of the christian spirit before men, *for their sakes*. The devout man, by illustrating the

excellencies of piety in his daily life, commends the religion he professes to the faith and love of all beholders. He exhibits to them what piety effects in moulding human character. His "light so shines before men, that they may be led to glorify God." The true-hearted Christian can reveal the influence of his piety as sweetly at work as at worship, — in a bargain as in a prayer, — in weaving or in selling jeans as in chanting psalms. The worldly do not merely need to hear how piety prays and preaches and sings; they need to see how it labors and trades and talks in every-day affairs, in the family and in social life. The sincere Christian will be anxious to show them that. He will propose to himself, as an end of living, that men shall see, every day, how character is formed and conduct controlled; how asperities are smoothed and evil is repressed; and how every winning grace is cherished under the influence of a practical Christianity.

Still another godly end, to be kept steadily in view by the Christian in his ordinary business, is, that he may make it the means of *imparting spiritual benefits*. Business brings him into contact with men. By conducting it in accordance with christian principles, he secures their confidence, and thus gains access to them and influence over them. He has thus opportunities for commending the Gospel of Christ directly to them. The word of an upright christian tradesman may often sink deeper into the heart, and make a more salutary and permanent impression, than an eloquent sermon. Why should not such an influ-

ence be sought and exercised, as one end of his business relations, by every Christian?

POSITIVE BENEFICENCE.

And then, again, by the accumulations of business, he may help forward all the blessed charities of the church of Christ. How far should one toil and trade with this very end in view? "Laboring," said St. Paul, "with your own hands, that you may have to give to him that needeth." Here we are required to labor with the definite purpose of giving away the proceeds; to consecrate the accumulations of toil to objects of benevolence. The pious merchant may thus carry on his business with the explicit design of making money to bestow in charity. How such an end sanctifies labor, infuses an element of positive piety into all the drudgery of trade and handicraft, and holds the glorifying of God in view as the main purpose of life! Such a principle generally adopted and regarded by Christians, would soon adorn the whole earth with blessed charities.

PURPOSE GIVES CHARACTER TO LIFE.

There can be no piety in any observance or performance in which these elements are wanting. If there be not *pious principle, a pious spirit, and a pious end*, then no ceremony or service can be acceptable to God. Without these, the knee may be bent in the attitude of devotion, and words of solemn sound may fall from the lip, but there is no prayer without

these: a choir or congregation may chant the words of an inspired psalm, but there is no praise. The want of these elements leaves every act of seeming worship to sink into a mere "bodily exercise, that profiteth nothing." And, on the other hand, the infusion of these elements into the commonest labors of life, raises them from mere worldly ploddings, and gives them a character of sanctity and devotion. Thus it is clear that there may be piety in ploughing, and none in praying. There may be acceptable and devout worship in the market-place, the warehouse and the workshop, and there may be nothing but selfishness and worldliness in the sanctuary itself. We may glorify God in our daily work, and we may displease Him in our Sabbath worship.

TESTIMONIALS.

The following spontaneous testimonials to the excellencies of Mr. Crane's character, the purity of his heart, and the beneficence of his life, may prove interesting to the reader, and allay any apprehension that this sketch is merely the flattering eulogy of a too partial friend.

Rev. Dr. Hoge, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, long acquainted with him, and a boarder with him in the same dwelling where he died, made an address following the funeral sermon, of which we find this report in the "True Union":—

"Seldom have I witnessed such a life and such a death-bed scene. Yes, dear brother, thou art missed

from the toils and enjoyments of human life, and thy place among loving friends, in the church and in society, will never more be filled; but thou art not missed among the ransomed in heaven; thou holdest a place there which never can be empty. Memory fails here to recall the exact language of Dr. Hoge's beautiful and touching apostrophe, containing an allusion to the probable joyful reunion of father and sons in a world where all the mysteries of human life had already been explained. He went on to speak of the frequent conversations with him which he had been, from his residence in the same house, and occupying an adjoining room, enabled to hold. He spoke of the deep humility and entire trust in atoning blood, which these conversations manifested. He mentioned that, on one occasion, on going into his room, Mr. C. said that he had been in great darkness; his life had passed in review before him, and he felt that he had been so unfaithful, he had lived to so little purpose. He was burdened with doubts until the thought struck him, But Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners. That just suited him; he was just the person, a poor sinner. From that thought new comfort sprung up,—his doubts vanished, and he was filled with peace. Any Christian, Mr. Hoge observed, could realize how one so devoted and efficient could have such feelings of self-abnegation. As one grows in grace, so he sinks in self-esteem. If we could take any satisfaction in any merit of our own, we should be less disposed to render all the praise to the glory of His grace.

“ Dr. Hoge continued his remarks with an allusion to Mr. C.’s sufferings and his christian-like patience, and remarked that, never had he been so disposed to arraign the Divine goodness as when he saw him endure, without a murmuring word, a degree of suffering the sight of which almost made him stagger. He could in no way reconcile it with his preconceptions of that benevolence, thus to afflict one so excellent, but by regarding this as a trial state, and these sufferings as a discipline for everlasting joy. He said that once only he heard him exclaim, with something like impatience, ‘ What shall I do ? ’ He replied, ‘ Do nothing, my brother, but commit yourself unto Him who has done all things for you.’ Immediately he was answered by a fervent pressure of the hand he held, and all was calm.

“ ‘ You would like, he continued, ‘ to hear some of his last words. After several paroxysms of suffering, he suddenly straightened himself, and collecting all his energies about him, said, in faltering tones, “ Kind friends, kind Redeemer, all is well.” ’ ”

“ He concluded his remarks by a touching reference to the surviving relatives of the deceased, alluded to the sleepless care of the devoted wife, and bespoke the sympathies and prayers of the people for her, and their friendship for the remaining son, a child of 12 years, — ‘ for,’ said he, ‘ he is the only son of his mother, and she is a widow.’ ”

“ Deep feeling thrilled through the audience as he closed. Indeed, the whole congregation — even men — were moved to tears during both addresses.”

Rev. Dr. Woodbridge, rector of an Episcopal church in Richmond, said at the grave:—

“He had long known and esteemed the beloved brother whose remains were now to be gathered to its kindred dust, as a devoted fellow-laborer in the cause of the Redeemer; and when, yesterday, he heard that he was gone, he felt much as a soldier on the field of battle, who turns to find his beloved comrade fallen by his side.”

Rev. Dr. Fuller, of Baltimore, in a communication to a religious paper, speaks of him in these terms:—

“A sad bereavement has visited the churches of Christ in Richmond, in Virginia, and throughout the land. James C. Crane has been removed from the scene of earthly labor to the rest which remains for the people of God. That insidious disease which had almost desolated his household was, at last, commissioned by inscrutable wisdom to prostrate his beloved form, and has laid him low. The bereaved mother, whom he had consoled as child after child fell beneath the “insatiate archer,” is now widowed in heart and home; and the only remaining child is orphaned of a father’s (and such a father’s) guardian care. To them the loss is irreparable; and gladly would I seek to infuse comfort into their bosoms, but that their grief is too sacred to be publicly intruded upon. I may, however, speak of the

affliction to the churches; for this is no common calamity.

“Brother Crane was endowed with an intellect of great power. In judgment, in capacity for all business, in energy, in indefatigable endurance of patient labor, in clear discrimination of truth, in a penetration which no sophistry could elude,—in all these elements, where is the man who may be called his superior? And these mental gifts were all consecrated to Jesus. As a Superintendent of the Sunday school, he stood preëminent and alone. In the church, his wisdom and experience were unsurpassed, age and experience finding his counsels of unspeakable worth. In every emergency, all turned instinctively to him, and never turned in vain.

“But the greatness of his mind was transcended by the virtues of his heart. Firmness, in him, was combined with gentleness and tenderness. It was not the hardness of the rock, but the uprightness of the oak, which bends without losing its elastic and rebounding vigor. No one could look into his face and not feel the generous warmth of his character. As a father, a husband, a brother, a friend, he was all sincerity, truth and love. His passions were strong, but were under the most conscientious government. He looked down upon everything mean and vile with a feeling which would have been contempt had it not been tempered with pity. He felt injuries keenly, but forgave almost in the very moment when injury was felt. The grace of God had so softened and sanctified his nature, that he was inca-

pable of malice or revenge; and peace, and charity, and good will to all, pervaded his entire being.

"I mourn for him as for a most dear and honored brother; but I know the grief is selfish. He is with Jesus; and we ought to weep, not for him, but for ourselves, who are still exposed to the sorrows and sins from which he is emancipated forever.

"His disease was protracted, and his sufferings severe; but his faith was immovable. He fell asleep, whispering, 'I can trust HIM;' 'I am ready;' 'Come, come, come.'

"Such examples were not given us to be lost, but to be copied and multiplied. 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'

"R. F."

Rev. Dr. Stowe, of Boston, in a letter of sympathy and condolence to Mr. William Crane, of Baltimore, thus expresses his sense of his piety and usefulness:—

"BOSTON, April 12, 1856.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—

"I learn from the 'True Union,' of the 10th inst., that your excellent brother, James C. Crane, of Richmond, has finished his earthly mission and entered his heavenly home. My heart felt the intelligence, for I had long known him, and cherished for him an affectionate esteem. Most cordially could I accept the estimate of his worth as sketched by the Rev. Dr. Fuller. I loved him as a *man*, in whose mental structure were no unsound timbers, and none out of a due proportion. He was a whole man, true and

noble, combining the two rarely-united excellencies, beauty and strength. I loved him as a *Christian*, in whom were conspicuous all the graces that enter into the composition of a well-adjusted, harmonious religious character. He was one who added to his faith virtue, and the whole series of excellencies, terminating in the crowning quality—love. But I admired him especially as an *earnest Christian*. I have seen him in numerous places, and under a great variety of circumstances, and all his developments have made upon me, definitely and deeply, the impression that his religion was a principle; that his love for the kingdom of Christ was a passion; that the whole machinery of his nature was moved by hidden forces of great power; and that he found his chief happiness in vigorous exertion for the glory of his Master and the good of his race. He was eminently a *working Christian*. Others may have given more money than he; but few men have given the same amount of gratuitous personal service. Warmly, earnestly unweariedly, he put his hand to the work, and by the force of example, as well as by the stirring persuasions of his lips, he induced others to become co-laborers. If exceeded by some in the extent of the lines of apparent influence, he was unsurpassed by any as to the power with which he filled his own circle, flinging life into every part, and touching every accessible spring of activity. Most appropriately did his pastor represent him as one that will be *missed*. I can understand that his removal must be a loss to the First Church,—to

Richmond, — to Virginia. It is a loss to the great christian brotherhood. *That* vacancy will not be easily filled.

“I am glad to see the intimation that a memoir of the beloved brother will be prepared, ‘with a view to delineate the character and responsibilities of the christian merchant.’ Boston has furnished one such exhibition, in her Nathaniel R. Cobb; New York another, in her Garratt N. Bleeker; Richmond can now supply hers, in James C. Crane, who, differing from the others, was a man of the same largeness of heart, and the same consecration to the great end of his being.

“I know that you, my dear brother, must keenly feel this bereavement. You have my heart’s tender sympathy, and the assurance of my prayers that God will strengthen you to bear the affliction, and sanctify it to your advancement in the divine life, and your meetness for the rest that awaits you. When you and I first became acquainted, we were young. Thirty-three years have turned our shadows far round the semicircle, and now those shadows are rapidly lengthening. I need not exhort *you* to work while it is day; but I may say, Let us work on patiently, ever ready for the summons that shall terminate our earthly service, and introduce us to the rewards of rich, fr  e, sovereign grace.

“With affectionate sympathy,

“Your brother and fellow-laborer,

“BARON STOWE.

“William Crane, Esq., Baltimore, Md.”

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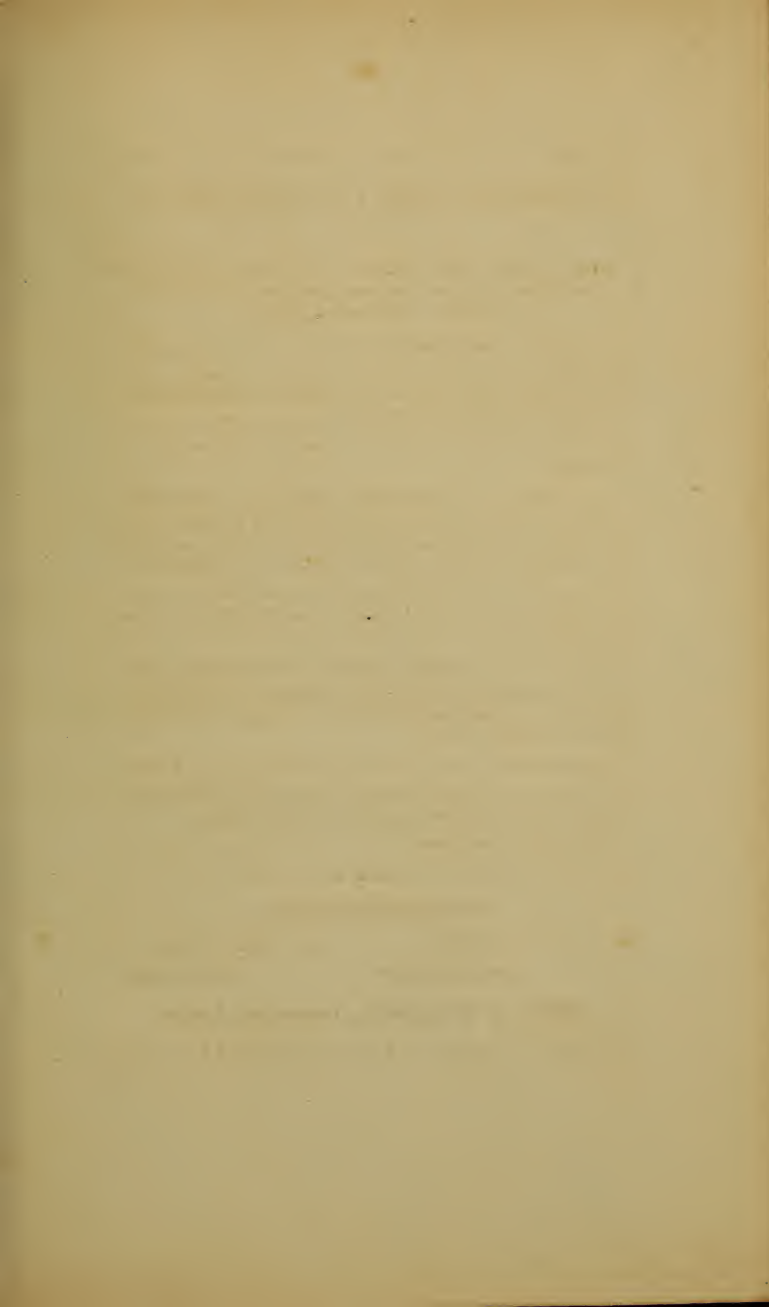
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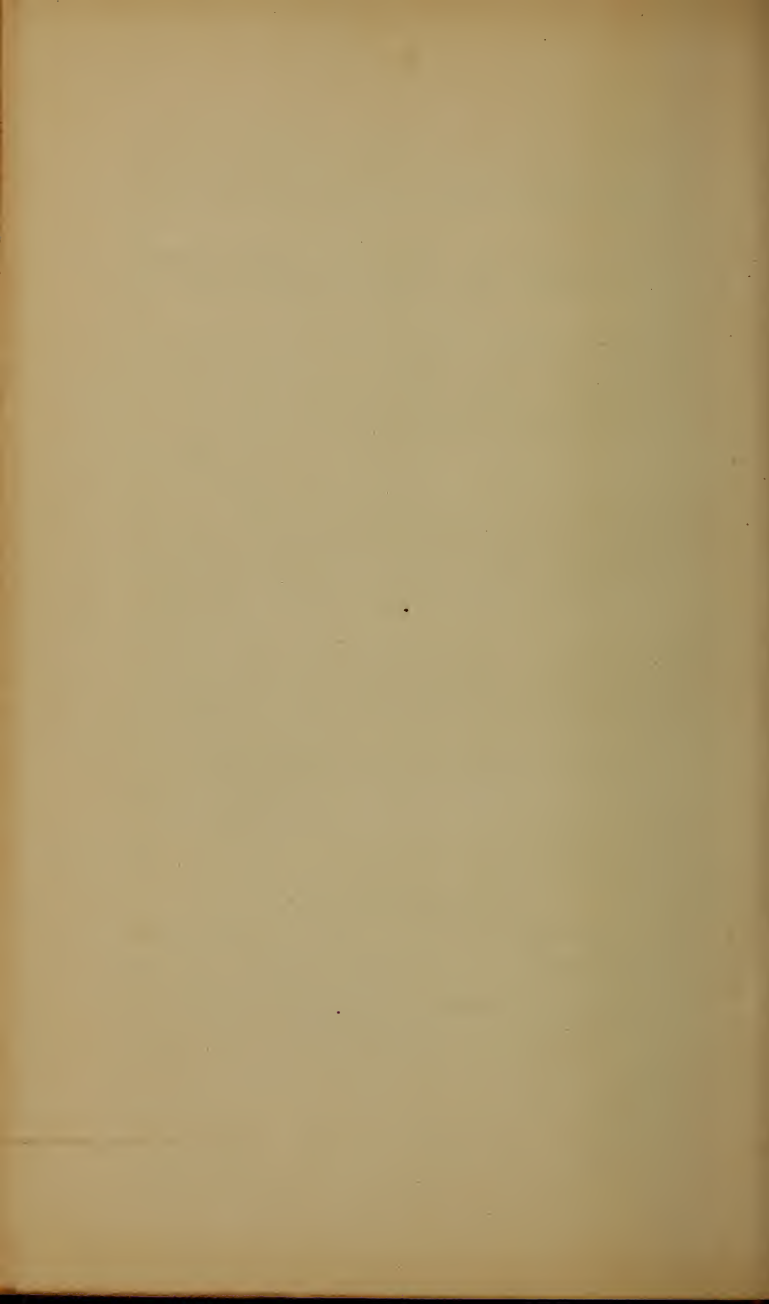
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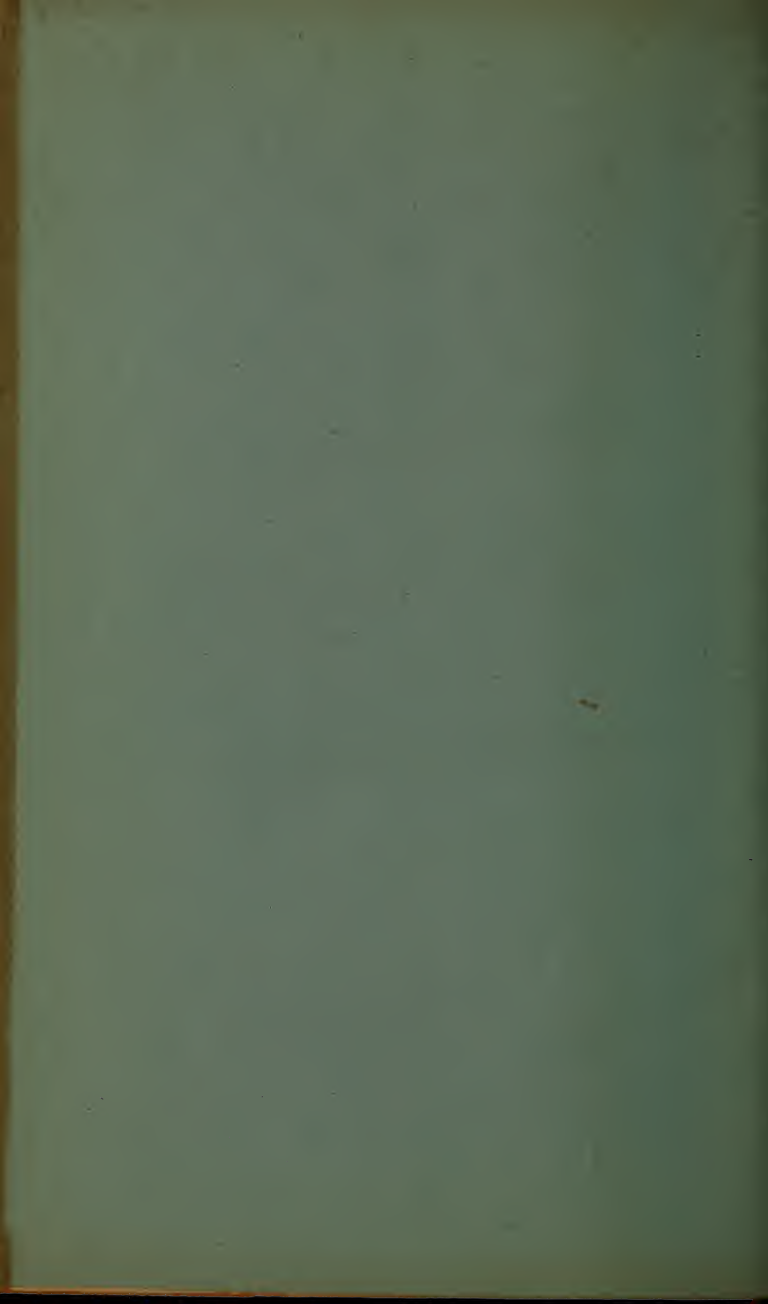
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